Revolution and pachakuti : political and indigenous cinema in Bolivia and Colombia

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on cinema and video made by and about indigenous or subaltern people and communities in Bolivia and Colombia, and discusses the interaction between different cultural notions of social change and of aesthetic representation. It centres on the productions of Jorge Sanjinés' Bolivian Ukamau Group, and of Marta Rodríguez's Fundación Cine Documental in Colombia. Previous studies of these filmmaking collectives have tended to view them under the banner of either national cinematic traditions; the artistic and political avant-garde often termed as the 'New Latin American Cinema'; or a longer history of indigenous film and media. This thesis is bound by none of these categories, but asks how they overlap, mutually inform and alter one another. By combining close textual analysis with wider contextual and historical accounts of the films' production and distribution, it examines the linkages between aesthetic form, cultural memory and political action.

It thus begins with an account of the national and international circulation of militant avant-garde *indigenista* and revolutionary cinema in the 1960s and 1970s, showing how these groups inserted their work into existing and nascent political and cultural movements, infrastructures and networks. It discusses how the film collectives' early works converted existing national tropes of the primitive into potential subjects of continental revolution. It argues that methodological and textual innovations have increasingly opened films up to the cultural and political expressions of their participants, and converted them into fields of intercultural dialogue and debate. It proposes that even videos made by indigenous people themselves are inevitably mediated by aesthetic, technological and institutional structures, and considers some of the strategies that indigenous intellectuals and video-makers have employed in response. This thesis concludes that the most effective political cinemas have been those that have acknowledged and gained strength from their own status as mediations between different political, cultural and ideological spheres; between European-derived notions of social change (revolution) and Andean ones (*pachakuti*).

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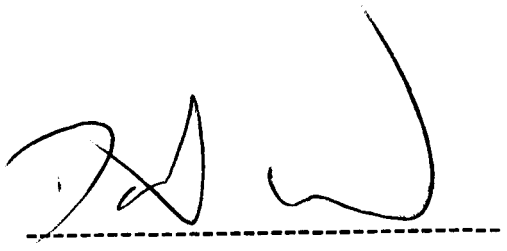
Any errors or omissions are, of course, entirely my own responsibility.

A note on translations:

In direct quotations from films and texts, where no English version is cited all translations from Spanish and French are my own. Similarly, English release titles have been used wherever subtitled versions are available; all other English film titles are my own translations.

96,693 words.

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and it has not been submitted for a degree at another university.



David M. J. Wood.

Introduction

Revolution and *pachakuti*

A Brechtian maxim: "Don't start from the good old things but the bad new ones."
Walter Benjamin[1]

For the indigenous person, every event is indelible and each day engraves a memory into his heart. For neither what has passed is past, nor are the futures forgotten.
Manuel Quintín Lame[2]

As its title suggests, this thesis is concerned with cultural encounter. Its protagonists are film collectives that since the 1960s have travelled the length and breadth of their countries, sometimes hauling unwieldy cameras, projectors and electricity generators, often charting unknown indigenous territories and communities, always driven by a passionate desire to construct dialogue across geographical, class, racial and national boundaries. They have travelled abroad with their films, and sometimes with their cameras, seeking convergence, debate and solidarity, hunting down new audiences, protagonists and benefactors. The more they have travelled the more their films have inevitably slid from their grasp, taking on lives of their own in new lands.

The filmmakers, like the celluloid sounds and images they produce, have acted as mediators and translators of linguistic and cultural difference; they have been technicians, interpreters and facilitators of diverging systems of knowledge and technology. Usually educated in aesthetics, concepts and techniques originating in European and North American academies or production studios, they have brought foreign models to bear on Latin American experiences. But they have also deformed the imported templates by stamping onto them the realities they have encountered at home. Their fundamental commitment has been to social change, be it through armed

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[1] 'Conversations with Brecht', in Benjamin (2003: 105-121).
[2] The Colombian indigenous leader as cited in *Na' Wëthaw Püt'/That's How We Organised* (dir. Jesús Bosque, 1996).

revolution or cultural resistance. The more they have looked forwards to a brighter future, the greater their urge to delve into the past, to remember and revitalise what went before so as better to build what is to come. Their films, like latent springs, are charged with their protagonists' different ways of recounting and relating to their own histories: partial glimpses into individual or communal lives that are ready to burst out from the screen into the world, shaking up and throwing out official accounts of events and timeless national stories. The histories that they relate are shaped by their narrators' flexible, permeable conceptions of revolutionary social change – often confronting indigenous philosophical structures with Western cosmologies.

This thesis therefore explores the space at which, through the work of radical film and video collectives and groups, European and Andean notions of change have met: the space in between revolution and *pachakuti*. When they began documenting and dramatising their countries' indigenous and proletarian interiors in the 1960s, the Ukamau Group (based in Bolivia and led by Jorge Sanjinés) and the Fundación Cine Documental (based in Colombia and run by Marta Rodríguez with Jorge Silva, until the latter's death in 1988) were strongly influenced by Marxist notions of revolution. Yet as they became more deeply involved with indigenous societies they discovered that their 'subjects' or protagonists often subscribed to a quite different notion of epochal change. While European notions of revolution often imagined a relentless, linear progress from an outmoded past into a utopian future, Andean *pachakuti* was a cataclysmic movement into a new era which was also, nonetheless, an epochal return to 'a past moment stored in the symbolism of the collective subconscious' (Estermann 1998: 187). Post-Enlightenment 'Revolution' arises out of the past to oust outdated social relations and economic practices and replace them with a new paradigm: in Marx and Engels' words, 'all fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can

ossify' (2004: 7). Revolution frequently conceives of history as an ever-progressing continuum moving through 'homogeneous empty time' (Benjamin 1999: 252). *Pachakuti*, on the other hand, views time as at once progressing into the future *and* repeating previously lived experience: a past but not superseded ancestral era that lives on in the communal memory and is accessed through ritual, informing and improving the present.[3]

The present study therefore asks how film has served as a conduit for cultural encounters; how Europe and Andean America have been complicit in one another's imagining. It examines the ways in which Eurocentric tropes such as nationhood, modernity and development have determined the manners in which dominant social strata have regarded their national subordinates; but it also shows how silenced indigenous or proletarian subjects have answered back. It looks at the ways in which experiments in narrative form and emancipatory models of film production and distribution have sought to upset the colonial and hierarchical relations that underpin mainstream cinematic representations. It shows how film and video have been used, not just as a way of nostalgically rescuing lost histories, but of intervening in the ways that histories and identities are formed, updated, and integrated into present-day struggles. In short, this thesis looks at the ways in which film and video are located at the juncture of aesthetics and politics. It performs close textual analyses of selected scenes and sequences from films alongside discussions of the wider political and cultural contexts, and comments on the ways in which the processes of producing and exhibiting them

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[3] For European notions of time, progress and revolution, see Perry Anderson (1984); Benedict Anderson (1991); Williams (1998: 270-274); Benjamin (1999: 245-255); and Marx and Engels (2004). Benedict Anderson (1991: 26) borrows Benjamin's notion of 'homogeneous, empty time' as an analogue of the European conception of the nation; later he addresses the interrelationship between national and revolutionary conceptions of history (particularly 155-162). Perry Anderson and Benjamin both point out, however, that notions of dialectical historical time and revolution (including that of Marx) cannot be reduced to a simple moving-forward. Perry Anderson proposes that Marx's invocation of 'constant, uninterrupted, everlasting' revolution suggests a time 'in which each moment is perpetually different from every other by virtue of being next, but – by the same token – is eternally *the same* as an interchangeable unit in a process of infinite recurrence' (1984, emphasis in original). For comparative discussions of revolution and *pachakuti*, see Rowe and Schelling (1991); Estermann (1998).

have sought to intervene in the social world. It thus places the communicational and propagandistic function of a medium that can be reproduced indefinitely to spread messages far and wide, alongside its unique capacity for stirring unconscious and irrational desire. From the first experiments of the militant collectives in the 1960s, to present-day videos made by indigenous people or activists, the present work shows how calls to political action are never far away from the intangible, irreducible qualities of affective, emotional or historical identification.

When the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental began making and distributing films in the 1960s, they exuded the impression of doing something that had never been done before. Armed with new, lightweight, cheap and relatively unobtrusive 16mm film cameras and portable sound recording apparatus, these filmmakers set about the streets of La Paz (*Revolución/Revolution*, dir. Jorge Sanjinés, 1963) and Bogotá (*Chircales/The Brickmakers*, dir. Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva, 1965-1972) to document the atrocious misery that festered, unseen and unheard, as a constant backdrop to their metropolitan lives, and which their cinematic forefathers had so notably failed to register. If these early experiments revealed inert, putrefying urban landscapes, the collectives' subsequent forays took them to indigenous peasant *ayllus* or villages (the Ukamau Group's *Yawar Mallku/Blood of the Condor*, 1969 or *¡Fuera de aquí!/Get Out Of Here!*, 1977; Silva and Rodríguez's *Planas: testimonios de un etnocidio. Las contradicciones del capitalismo/Planas: Testimony of an Ethnocide. The Contradictions of Capitalism*, 1971, or *Nuestra voz de tierra, memoria y futuro/Our Voice of the Land, Memory and Future*, 1982) and mining towns (the Ukamau Group's *¡Aysa!/Landslide*, 1965, and *El coraje del pueblo/The Courage of the People*, 1971), where they found communities that already had a strong sense of cultural, historical and political self. For many, the profundity with which they researched their subjects, and (sometimes) dramatised their own involvement with the peoples they documented made

them national pioneers, heralds of an aesthetic and methodological revolution in socially-committed filmmaking.[4]

On an international level the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental found kindred spirits among their fellow cineastes of the New Latin American Cinema, the name given to a broad ideological convergence of modernist and Marxist-inspired filmmaking practices that emerged in the late 1960s, and which roughly cohered into something that might be called a movement through a series of meetings, debates and discussions in film festivals across the continent in those years. These were events that offered filmmakers the opportunity to share ideas, gain a sense of international solidarity and exchange thoughts on aesthetic and methodological strategies. As the 1970s bore on, militant filmmaking networks took on increasing importance as politicised cineastes fled the rightwing military regimes that began to take power across the continent. The 'movement' also offered European and North American critics and audiences, many of whom 'discovered' Latin America through these cinemas, a convenient framework through which they could express both aesthetic appreciation of and political sympathies with the work of embattled Third World directors. In turn, as both Film Studies and Latin American Studies gathered momentum in the Western academe through the 1980s, it was the New Latin American Cinema that gained the status as almost the point of origin of the continent's 'authentic' cinematic tradition, since previous manifestations were thought to have drawn largely on foreign, usually Hollywood, models of filmmaking and distribution.[5]

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[4] Bolivian national histories include Gumucio (1983) and Mesa (1985); for Colombia, see Martínez Pardo (1978) and Valverde (1978).

[5] The 1967 festival at Viña del Mar, Chile is most commonly listed as the originary moment of the New Latin American Cinema. For documents and writings relating to the New Latin American Cinema, see Hennebelle and Gumucio eds (1981); *Hojas de cine* (1988); Birri (1996); Martin ed. (1997a). See also the film magazine *Cine cubano* throughout the 1960s and 1970s. For the speeches at the 1987 festival in Havana, the twentieth anniversary Viña del Mar, Chile, see Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (1988). For European and North American, mainly academic studies privileging the New Latin American Cinema, and its global counterpart 'Third Cinema', as modernist points of origin, see Linares (1976); Gabriel (1982); Chanan (1983); Burton ed. (1986 and 1990); López (1986); Armes (1987); Pines and Willemen eds (1989); Pick (1993); Martin ed. (1997a and 1997b); and Wayne (2001).

The films made by the Ukamau Group and Silva/Rodríguez in this period were certainly remarkable and ground-breaking in many ways, and their radical ruptures with the past certainly played a large part in my own decision to embark on a wide-ranging survey of their work. It is far from my intention, however, to pinpoint them in a glorious moment of timeless, authentic, anti-imperialist militancy, or to win for them the long-awaited 'condescension of posterity': the fate that some commentators fear might befall politicised non-Western cinemas as the recent flurry of academic interest threatens to institutionalise them within a universal cinematographic canon (Wayne 2001; Guneratne 2003). Nor do I seek to prove that they are 'authentically' national, indigenous or non-Western, as both these and other filmmakers and their advocates have often sought to claim (Rodríguez 1977; Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979; Gabriel 2000). My aim is rather to ask how and why these cinemas became configured and presented as original. What are the ideological underpinnings of such claims? In whose interests, and from whose perspectives, were they presented to the world as artefacts of a reality that had never before been documented? Following Shohat (1998), I aim to undo the 'elsewhere'-ness of Area Studies that obscures the role of the West in structuring and imagining other regions of the world. What, then, was the role of the exoticising European imaginary in establishing the New Latin American Cinema as an analytical framework?[6]

Of course, these were not the first filmmakers to have explored their countries' rural hinterlands. Bolivian cinema has drawn on indigenous themes since the silent era, often in the form of melodrama: Pedro Sambarino's *Corazón aymara/Aymara Heart*, 1925); and José María Velasco Maidana's *La profecía del lago/The Prophecy of the*

From a Latin American perspective, Monsiváis discusses the ruptures of the New Latin American Cinemas in the context of a contradictory, long-standing relationship of attraction and rejection between Latin American and US cinemas (2000).

[6] I thus concur with King, whose non-reductive theoretical framework views the New Latin American Cinema 'not as a static category, but as a dynamic, constantly changing mosaic of influences'. Likewise, he holds that 'Latin American culture cannot be stereotyped in terms of a crude 'Third World' opposition to metropolitan discourses: it has evolved, in part, as a dialogue with the West' (1990: 3-4).

Lake, 1923/1925), and *Warawara/Stars* (1929). In Colombia, the ethnographic impulse stretches back at least as far as César Uribe Piedrahita's *Expedición al Caquetá/Expedition to the Caquetá*, 1930).[7] But whereas those experiences tended to take the indigenous and the popular as anthropological curiosities, or as well-worn national tropes of primitive Otherness, the films studied in this thesis set out actively to undo the colonising anthropological or melodramatic gaze.[8] As such, and as I have outlined above, they squared up their anthropological and sociological curiosity with the *marxisant* discourses of the continental meetings they attended, announcing ruptures that were both spatial (breaking with 'Western' cinema) and temporal (breaking with their national forebears) in scope. Of course, these ruptures were not always as complete as they may have seemed: the films made by the Ukamau Group and the Rodríguez/Silva team have always been inevitably bound to established models of producing or distributing films. The present work therefore discusses the extent to which militant or politically committed filmmakers can or should negotiate with or resist potentially co-optive and ideologically loaded national or 'universal' narratives.

My interest in these films also lies in the profound challenge that their uncompromising analyses of racial, historical and class identity present to received notions surrounding the New Latin American Cinema – too often thought of as an ideologically coherent movement promoting Marxist change. According to Rodríguez, at the 1977 Mérida New Latin American Cinema Festival (Venezuela) Rodríguez and

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[7] According to the historian of Colombian ethnographic film Carlos Julio González Colonia, *Expedición al Caquetá* 'is the first documentary that sets out to register the exotic in the far-flung territories of Colombia. In this sense [...] it could be said to be the first Colombian ethnographic film' (personal correspondence, September 2005). However, sources for ethnographic documentary in the early sound and silent eras in Colombia are scarce, due in large part to a lack of surviving materials. Martínez Pardo's exhaustive history of national cinema concentrates on well-known classic fiction productions, while more recent accounts of national documentary give over just a few brief sentences to the early years, all but beginning their analyses in the 1960s (Martínez Pardo 1978; Campo 1998; Caicedo González 1998-1999). For a thorough account of silent indigenous melodrama in Bolivia, see Gumucio (1983: 57-120).

[8] The socially-committed but still essentially folkloric documentaries of the Bolivian Jorge Ruiz (*Vuelve Sebastiana/Come Back, Sebastiana*, 1953) and Gabriela Samper (*El páramo de Cumanday/The Heights of Cumanday*, 1965; *El hombre de la sal/The Salt Man*, 1968) were also crucial references for Sanjinés, Rodríguez and Silva.

Silva stood slightly aloof from the discussions of the main festival, more interested in engaging in parallel debates with filmmakers with whom they felt greater affinity – perhaps most notably Beatriz Palacios of the Ukamau Group – on the efficiency of film language, the possibility of achieving 'organic integration' with the people they filmed, and the role of film in recuperating popular history (Valverde 1977). Yet for all that these two projects had in common, previous academic and critical studies of their work have tended to focus either on their status within national (Bolivian or Colombian) cinematographies, or within the more general New Latin American Cinema movement (see note above). This thesis seeks to go some way towards bridging those two approaches, drawing out a dialogue between two rather different sets of strategies that address similar sets of problems. I hope that it will therefore help understand some of the ethnic fractures that lie at the heart of an all-encompassing project of Bolivarian emancipation, as well as shedding some light onto some earlier instances of the transnational networks that today are much used by indigenous *videastas* and communicators.

I have therefore selected a number of films to examine in depth, each of which is studied in relation to the particular historical moment or juncture at which it was produced, and the ways in which the aesthetic strategies and historical performances it contains reacts to and interacts with its surroundings. Instead of approaching films as repositories of sociological or anthropological knowledge or information, I treat them as cultural artefacts lying in tension, their potential meaning only activated when interpreted by the spectator. Underpinning my use of close textual analysis in my discussions of some films is a belief that the internal workings of a film-text have some bearing on the ways in which it is 'read' and received. Yet films are not autonomous bodies in a vacuum: as well as being what they are (celluloid or digital recordings or representations), they are the products of where they are and where they are going (the

environments in which they are produced and circulate). This thesis therefore gives some account of the wider political contexts in which these films were made, and takes into consideration that they have acted as parts of wider process of consciousness-raising, training and education.

The extent to which textual analysis is possible is itself partly dependent on globalised networks of production and distribution – an issue that brings us back to the importance of recognising the role of the European imaginary in creating or accounting for foreign cultures, and raises questions about the neutrality and objectivity of the outside eye gazing on or studying foreign cultures (Shohat and Stam 1994: 342-347). As I came towards the end of my period of fieldwork in Colombia in mid-2004, I grew increasingly frustrated that I had been unable to access the video archives of the Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia, ONIC), the library in Bogotá that houses an enormous collection of video and television productions made by Colombian indigenous people. Without viewing, and perhaps making copies of some of this material, I felt, I would be unable to build up a proper picture of indigenous video in Colombia; because of constraints of time, money and security I was unable to travel to regional video-making centres. For almost the entirety of my three months in Bogotá the *videoteca* remained unmanned due to staff shortages: all too frequently because all of the efforts of the organisation's personnel was channelled into dealing with the latest massacre of indigenous people in one of Colombia's war zones. Needless to say, next to this atrocious reality my own project seemed quite trivial. It also brought home to me the extent to which even digital media produced on a shoestring are not endlessly available and reproducible: the vicissitudes of capital and political violence intervene in the ways and means by which knowledges are produced, disseminated, and made available for academic study. I can

therefore make no claim that my own approach to these films is impartial, complete, or unmediated.[9]

Just as I cannot claim to be speaking for the films I analyse, I problematise the notion that their directors can be said to speak on behalf of their subjects, or that their perspectives naturally coincide with those of their protagonists. Another concern of this thesis is to examine the (perhaps) inevitably hierarchical relationship between these filmmakers and the people who 'acted' in their films. Underlying this analysis is the question of how far the 'New Latin American Cinemas' or 'Third Cinemas' *really* enabled the subaltern to speak (Spivak 1988). If *El coraje del pueblo* allowed Bolivian miners to have their own re-enaction of past trauma recorded on celluloid, how does Jorge Sanjinés' organising presence alter the miners' own conceptions of their communal history? If Colombian video-makers use already-existing, conventional modes of representation to document events from their own perspectives, to what extent do cross-cultural 'linguistic' constraints mediate between collective memory and its representation?

Jorge Sanjinés has frequently spoken of himself as a Gramscian 'organic intellectual': unlike the 'traditional' intellectual who cloaks a tacit alliance to historical class formations behind a pretence of neutrality, he overtly aligns himself with the popular class in order to 'give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields' (Gramsci 1971: 5). For Gramsci, since the peasantry does not produce its own intellectuals, it is the duty of the organic intellectual to raise its fragmented and episodic 'common-sense' in order to 'organis[e] social hegemony and state domination' (Gramsci 1971: 12-13; see also Hall 1996a). Sanjinés, though, has never made a wholehearted pretence of being 'organic' in the sense of emerging from the popular or indigenous classes. By his own account he

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[9] For studies that problematise the 'objectivity' of the Western intellectual, see Rivera 1987; Schiwy 2002b.

considered himself an intellectual from a young age, and in the late 1950s he travelled to Chile as a budding poet and philosopher, eventually discovering his vocation on a 'little film course' in the Chilean city of Concepción (Sanjinés and Ukamau Group 1979: 131-134; Gamboa ed. 1999: 312-318). Hailing as he does from a country in which social class is heavily racialised, his own middle-class origins are almost inscribed into the white, European features that are evident from the photographs that often accompany published interviews and articles on his work. He has on occasion, though, emphasised his own (minimal) indigenous heritage, thereby making an appeal to the telluric authenticity of his perspective, while suggesting that all Bolivians are in some sense Indian and therefore should ally themselves to his cause.[10]

Like Sanjinés, Marta Rodríguez (a trained anthropologist) has approached her subjects with a measured combination of social distance and involved participation. She herself had a relatively comfortable upbringing in Bogotá until her family fled to Spain following the violent uprising of 1948 when Rodríguez was fifteen years old; she subsequently moved to Paris, where she became impassioned with ethnographic cinema through studying with Jean Rouch at the Musée de l'Homme. Jorge Silva, whom Rodríguez met in Bogotá via film society circles, was a photographer who had been brought up in poverty by his indigenous mother in Girardot and Huila. Yet when the Rodríguez/Silva team began making films together, they discovered that it was the university-educated anthropologist Rodríguez who was more interested in pursuing indigenous themes, while Silva (the half-Indian proletarian) tended more towards Latin American intellectual circles, frequently citing writers such as Carpentier, García Márquez and Cortázar in discussions about their films.[11] Regardless of their divergent

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[10] 'I think that even those commonly called white are *mestizos* in Bolivia. I have some Indian blood that goes back to the fourth generation on my mother's side, while my father comes from a Spanish family' ('Jorge Sanjinés: Ukamau and Yawar Mallku' 1971: 43).

[11] Rodríguez's accounts, in *Marta Rodríguez* (dir. Martha Muñoz Vásquez for the *Historia Debida* series); conversations with Marta Rodríguez, June-July 2004. For Silva on the 'boom' writers, see Bello and Bernal (1982); 'Jorge Silva y Marta Rodríguez' (1982); León Hoyos (1982); and Silva (1988).

and complex origins, in interviews with film critics all three filmmakers have cast themselves as intellectuals at the service of popular processes of social change.

The ambiguous backgrounds of Sanjinés, Rodríguez and Silva hint at the difficulties inherent in placing boundaries between intellectuals and the people; between indigenous and non-indigenous; between working and middle-class, since none of those categories are stable, homogeneous or impermeable absolutes.[12] It highlights the fact that race and class are performed constructs rather than immanent states: just as much a case of ideological positioning as of revealing origins. Neither racial nor class identification is a question of either/or; they exist on fluctuating and mutually dependent continuums. Sanjinés, Rodríguez and Silva's backgrounds also suggest that their projects involved not simply sculpting their indigenous subjects round to a class way of thinking, or twisting their own class determinisms until they became consonant with the Andean notion of *pachakuti*. Their films were rather processes of mutual entwinement between already-existing class and racial perspectives in search of an ideological position that could forge an alliance of popular classes, so that they might eventually achieve hegemony. Race and class are not perpetually opposed but interlocking categories of identification; they are the raw materials out of which filmmakers have striven to construct the basis for revolution (Mariátegui 1968; Rivera 1987; Wade 1993; Hall 1996a and 1996b).

To attend briefly to their directors' biographical backgrounds does not necessarily mean that we must take an *auteurist* approach to studying these films, since my analyses take directorial intentionality as contextual detail rather than a defining property of their films. But despite these filmmakers' frequent efforts to reject the label of *auteur* as a throwback from a decadent, individualistic, bourgeois conception of

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[12] The question of whether terms such as 'indigenous' and 'Indian' should be employed to denote the autochthonous peoples of the Americas is a complex one, and there is no space to elaborate on it here. Estermann (1998: 49-81) opts for the term *runa* (the Quechua word for both human being, and all those of pre-Hispanic origin. Here I have opted to use the terms 'indigenous', 'Indian' and 'Andean', since all are used commonly by those who have made and participated in the films studied here.

cinema, and despite their primary aims of using cinema as a tool for instituting an ongoing, collective and radical process of social change, when they travelled to either Latin American, North American or European intellectual arenas, the productions of the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental, along with those of nearly every radical filmmaking group and collective that counted themselves among the New Latin American Cineastes, were almost always marketed, received and written about as the works of talented intellectual revolutionaries.[13] The circles in which these cineastes moved made it nigh-on impossible for them entirely to overturn existing conceptions of the film-artist.

The auteurist angle from which these cinemas have so often been regarded is not, of course, a result of gratuitous dishonesty or a lack of comprehension of the nature of the cinemas that were dealt with: it has a historical and practical rationale. Twenty years have now passed since Julianne Burton indicated that the French *politique des auteurs* was adapted by Latin American filmmakers not as the retrospective critical position it held in contemporary France but as a 'practical-strategical position [...] from which to combat the actual or putative norm of a hierarchical studio-based system' (Burton 1985: 3). In the absence of national or regional infrastructures that could support production, argues Burton, filmmakers were obliged, perhaps against their instincts, to pose as vanguard artists who could carry cinema away from its alienated state at the core of the ideological machinery of capitalism, and on whose shoulders a revolutionary film praxis could be constructed.

Subsequent studies of films such as *Chircales* and *El coraje del pueblo* have certainly engaged with their textual and methodological erosion of directorial authority (López 1990; Burton 1990 and 1997; Pick 1993). But even these works have too often

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[13] For the rejection of the status of authors or creators, see Solanas and Getino (1973); Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau (1979); and Silva and Rodríguez (1986). For writing on of their films that tends to centre Sanjinés, Silva and Rodríguez as *auteurs*, see ch. 1 below; and coverage throughout the 1970s in such magazines as *Cahiers du Cinéma*, *Cinéma*, *Afterimage*, *Ojo al cine*, *Cine al día* and *Hablemos de cine*.

largely extracted these films from their wider social and political contexts, still making their directors appear as talented individuals to be celebrated for their vanguard breaking-down of textual and practical hierarchies. This thesis does not claim that authorship is an entirely superfluous category for the study of these films: the conditions in which they have been produced and disseminated mean that figures such as Sanjinés, Rodríguez and Silva are of more than marginal significance. But by giving a broader sense of the historical conditions in which these films were made, the present work aims to show that even if they originated as intellectual projects propelled by their directors, the processes by which they were created and circulated were as much subject both to wider societal movements and to the political and cultural interests of their protagonists as they were to the filmmakers' individual visions. Marvin D'Lugo has recently brought the problematic issue of authorship to the fore in relation to the New Latin American Cinema (2003). Far more work is required, though, before we can understand the nexus that that 'movement' created between authorship, nationality, militancy and wider social change.

In its final chapter, this thesis shifts its focus away from the Ukamau and Cine Documental collectives, although without losing sight of them entirely, and turns to some of the experiences of indigenous video-makers in Bolivia and Colombia since the early 1990s. On the one hand, this perspective does not preclude the idea that the projects of Jorge Sanjinés, Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva in the 1960s and 1970s were somehow the necessary forerunners to the spirit of audiovisual self-determination that characterises present-day indigenous video projects. But the focus on indigenous video also allows us to see the earlier modernist *indigenista* cinemas from a different historical angle that checks our temptation towards auteurism. By considering the ways in which indigenous *videastas* have appropriated previous representations of them, or utilised what Marxist theorists have denounced as 'alienating' modes of film narration, I

question the idea that those filmmakers were somehow single-handedly responsible for a reversal in the ways in which cinema is experienced by indigenous people.

Marta Rodríguez has recounted that in a 1992 workshop to train indigenous people in the use of audiovisual technologies, she used Robert Flaherty's seminal ethnographic documentary *Nanook of the North* (1922) in order to discuss the relationship between the documentary filmmaker and their filmed subject (Rodríguez 2002: 34). Recent scholarship on *Nanook* has highlighted its exploitative nature: the fact that it employs a redemptive Romantic narrative that enabled its Euro-American audiences to read it as an 'unmediated *referent*' of 'authentic Primitive man'; the ways in which it elides the Inuit's historic relationships with whites in order to promote Flaherty's own persona as the 'great explorer' (Rony 1996: 104 and 126, emphasis in original). Yet Rodríguez found that the indigenous delegates at the workshop saw in *Nanook* not Flaherty's self-aggrandizing discourse, but a picture of 'the communal labour that sets us apart as ethnic groups': the vision of the 'author' was subordinated by the indigenous viewers' desire to identify with their Inuit predecessors (Rodríguez 2002: 35). For indigenous video-makers, films such as *Nanook*, or those of the New Latin American Cinema, are not necessarily seen as intellectuals' co-optive and exoticist visions of them: they may be appropriated into a longer history of indigenous cinema in which who is represented, and when, may matter more than who represents them, why, and how.[14]

Perhaps the most useful way of seeing these films is not as ideological artefacts that transmit information or knowledge from one subject to another, but as 'constitutive mediations' between one historical-geographical moment and another; the material

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[14] The vast video library at the La Paz headquarters of CEFREC, the coordinating body of Bolivia's indigenous video network, holds indigenous-produced videos alongside films made by non-indigenous cineastes such as Jorge Sanjinés and Jorge Ruiz (catalogue available online at http://videoindigena.bolnet.bo, accessed 14 August 2003). For historiographies of indigenous cinema that appropriate works made by 'outsiders', see Iván Sanjinés (1995 and 1998); Iván Sanjinés and Marta Rodríguez (2002); Rodríguez (2002).

substance out of which cultural and political identities are wrought (Martín-Barbero 2003). The task of defining the precise and infinitely disparate ways in which different people have interacted with *indigenista* or indigenous films and videos, or of accounting for those media's ongoing roles in forming and re-forming identities, is well beyond the scope of the present work. But we should bear in mind that individuals' or communities' ways of relating to cultural products are most likely a concoction of rationalised reactions, reducible to the historical, social and political juncture at which we stand, and an *ir*reducible, primal, emotional recognition. As Stuart Hall has remarked in relation to literary studies,

> there has to be some limit to what I would call the subjective explosion. One needs to be aware of both its strengths – it gives one a kind of internal "inside" insight into those cultural processes that you don't get any other way; on the other hand, we are culturally formed, cultural subjects, and, as such, we have our limits. We are trying to understand cultures which are different from us, which have a different formation from us. (cited in Chen 1996: 401-402)

By balancing an analysis of aesthetic and textual operations with accounts of the wider social and political spheres within which the films exist, this thesis tries to approach an 'internal "inside" insight' into their processes while keeping a constant eye on the limits of the 'cultural subjects' who consume them – whether those subjects are indigenous peasants, miners, intellectuals, or television audiences. I hope that it will thus contribute to understanding the ways in which political art intervenes in the space between the rational and the irrational; between the objective and the subjective; between the social and the aesthetic.

The organisation of this thesis is only loosely chronological, reflecting both a desire to maintain some sense of historical coherence, and an awareness that purportedly neutral linear histories cannot but tacitly transmit a certain ideological perspective. Chapter 1 thus begins the story of militant Andean cinema *in medias res*, at a moment in which the 'authored' films of Jorge Sanjinés, and Marta Rodríguez and

Jorge Silva, had already hit the European festival scene in the 1970s. It compares these films' critical reception in foreign intellectual circles to the ways in which they circulated back home, often eking out spaces of visibility even as they were silenced by national regimes. By pointing out the hand of Europe in coproducing and disseminating them, and by raising some of the necessary negotiations that they have made with state institutions, this chapter therefore problematises an idea that has so often characterised readings of the new Latin American Cinemas: that they were somehow purely militant and authentically national cinematic products, free of outside ideological influences.

If Chapter 1 challenges the charitable Eurocentric perspective that such films portrayed an atrocious yet distant reality in which its 'First-World' audiences were powerless to intervene, Chapter 2 digs deeper into the financial and ideological complicity of Eurocentric primitivist prejudice that some oppositional films have been at pains to avoid. Using the self-reflective Colombian film *Agarrando pueblo/Picking on the People* (1977) as a theoretical framework, it looks at the ways in which the early films of the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental (*Revolución*, 1963; *Ukamau/And So It Is*, 1966; *Chircales*, 1965-1972) enter into dialogue with notions of the modern and the primitive, the revolutionary and the backward, the urban and the rural, the national and the tribal. As filmmakers delved ever deeper into their national spheres, they had to deal with the methodological and ethical problems of how to represent 'primitive' subjects as the harbingers of revolutionary national and continental modernity; how to avoid an exploitative portrayal of poverty-stricken people as generic emblems of a condemned Third World; how to avoid merely inciting self-indulgent sympathy and guilt among bourgeois voyeurs: in short, how to place film at the service of revolution.

Chapter 3 therefore shows how through both process and textual operations, *El coraje del pueblo* (dir. Jorge Sanjinés) and *Planas* (dir. Marta Rodríguez and Jorge

Silva) simultaneously uphold and break down interpretive hierarchies between filmmakers and subjects. It analyses the ways in which these films deal with the complex and overlapping themes of race and class struggle, and how their partial deconstruction of realist narrative strategies allows their protagonists to speak 'through' their texts, voicing their own modes of reading their locations to the historical junctures at which they stand. Chapter 4 discusses how two later films, *La nación clandestina/The Secret Nation* (dir. Jorge Sanjinés, 1989) and *Nuestra voz de tierra, memoria y futuro* (dir. Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva, 1975-1982) seek in different ways to become *constitutive* of the indigenous remembrance of history, rupturing Western narrative codes as they try to push film towards a Utopian alliance with indigenous politics. It looks at the ways in which these films activate age-old communal political memory as a strategy of both cultural cohesion and social change. It considers the ways in which they cannibalise European theoretical paradigms of revolutionary cinema, structurally 'indigenising' the film medium.

As I outlined above, Chapter 5 moves away from the textual analysis around which some of the previous chapters are centred, returning to the debate – raised in Chapter 1 – over the extent to which controlling the means of media production and dissemination is liberating or democratising. Because the potentially 'alienating' codes and practices of mainstream media are deeply rooted, how far can or should indigenous video-makers try to circumnavigate them? Is it perhaps more fruitful to face them head-on, exploiting the mainstream media's hunger for the unusual and the exotic in order to insidiously alter the cultural sphere from within, rather than to maintain a revolutionary isolation that might some day promote the arrival of all-embracing social change? This question will be addressed in the final, concluding section of the thesis, through its discussion of the Bolivian lesbian anarchist group Mujeres Creando, which actively positions itself within mainstream media and public space, seeking to alter the terms on

which ordinary people (rather than militant subjects) interact with the everyday social sphere.

A good many pages of this thesis are devoted to the question of *indigenista* and indigenous imagemakers' tentative negotiations with national and state institutions. It is only correct, then, to point out that a large part of the fieldwork for this project was carried out in the film, video and document archives of the Fundación Cinemateca Boliviana in La Paz, and the Patrimonio Fílmico Colombiano in Bogotá. Without the hard work that these institutions have carried out over the years to rescue every possible fragment of their national cinematic histories, many of the films, catalogues, interviews and articles I have consulted would have been simply inaccessible.

I also seek in this thesis to 'de-centre' filmmakers' directorial authority, proposing that we would do better to view films as mediating vehicles between subjects. However, the practicalities of researching their films, very few of which have ever been available on commercial release and many of which have enjoyed precious little coverage by either journalists or academics, has meant that the directors themselves have often necessarily been among my first ports of call in gathering historical, methodological and aesthetic information and reflections about them. My own approach to this project as a researcher reflects my belief that, while categories such as national patrimony and film authorship should be thoroughly interrogated and broken down, their strategic and analytical benefits cannot be denied.

Chapter One

Indigenous cinema across continents

Many countries in Latin America hide a tragic reality about which we know nothing...And we should remember that we, here, have nothing to say – we are, after all, free...Of course, you could dig up the odd jailed Breton, or a Corsican or two, fanatical about their country that we're strangling...Or the little schoolmistress who silently lets herself go, crushed by the monstrous cold...Yes, all right...But there's so little panache in all that! So little idealism!... We've got nothing to say... 'So we say nothing', replies the echo of our official cinema, auteurs, producers, nebulous commissions...So we'll go and see your films, compañeros, *your Latin American films, your films that are the most beautiful in the world!...And that bolsters our spirits. Yes, we must struggle...You must know that we are a thousand times closer to you than we are to our French colleagues, doing their pretty pirouettes, here, light years away from here...* (Aubert 1980: 238-239)

However much (or little) irony the film critic Alain Aubert intended when he spoke these words at the third Militant Cinema Day at the Rennes Cultural Centre in France in 1979, they were strongly evocative of a certain mood in French alternative and political film circuits at the time. Ever since the political upheavals of May 1968 and its aftermath, leftwing French critics – and their British and North American counterparts followed hot on their heels – had been locked in debate as to the path that militant and political cinema and criticism should take. The pages of such journals as *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Cinéthique* in France, and *Framework* and *Afterimage* in the UK, saw sometimes fierce wars of words being fought between advocates of different strands of avant-garde cinema – between analysts of the ideology of mainstream cinema and proponents of a 'purely' oppositional film theory and praxis.[1] For critics such as Aubert, the Latin American cinema that had been reaching the European festival circuit since the 1960s – films such as *Deus e Diablo na Terra do Sol/Black God White Devil* (dir. Glauber Rocha, Brazil, 1964), *La hora de los hornos/The Hour of the Furnaces* (dir.

[1] See Harvey (1978) and Rodowick (1988) for accounts and analyses of these debates.

Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, Argentina, 1968), *Yawar Mallku*, and *La batalla de Chile/The Battle of Chile* (dir. Patricio Guzmán, Chile, 1973-6) – and their accompanying manifestoes, written by committed filmmakers working in the thick of revolutionary struggle or social change, offered a healthy tonic to what they saw as the purely theoretical discussions over political cinema in contemporary Western Europe.

Aubert's comment also employs, or exploits, a rhetorical device used all too frequently by European writers reporting on cinematic achievements in Latin America. His caricature of well-meaning First World solidarity with Third World anti-imperialist struggles erects a structural separation between a safe and free France (and, by extension, Western Europe), whose idealism and revolutionary imagination had long since been lost to liberal democracy, and a Latin America that acts as a remote ideological battleground in which heroic students and romantic, noble Indians fight the Marxist struggle against the imperialist enemy. Latin America, generalised and homogenised, is brought to life by the immediacy of the cinematic image, and by the militant production stills and frame enlargements appearing in film magazines, press-books and promotional literature.

As such, many Latin American filmmakers who attended European film festivals in the 1960s and 1970s appeared as harbingers of global revolution, their Third World origins enabling them somehow to connect more deeply than their European counterparts with the 'true' aspirations of the people. At the same time, they made a considerable impact on the revolutionary imaginaries of social and political movements in the 'old world'. Walter Achugar, the Uruguayan distributor of Latin American cinema, has recalled how at the Pesaro film festival of 1968, in the heat of Western Europe's own moment of revolutionary fervour and some ten years before Aubert spoke of the *ennui* of social democracy, the Argentine director Fernando Solanas was carried through the streets on the audience's shoulders after a screening of his film *La hora de*

los hornos, amid clashes between radicalised crowds and the police (Achugar 1986). The majority of the Italian public quite likely had little concept of what life was like in Argentina, or direct reason to desire immediate political change in that far-off land. Certainly, much of the festival audience had not experienced poverty, violence and repression first-hand on the scale depicted in the film. Yet the film's emotive power and the indignation it aroused evidently stirred sufficient internationalist solidarity for Solanas and Getino's reading of Argentine history to add concrete political substance to the anti-hegemonic agenda that stirred the uprising of May 1968. Similarly, Alberto Elena and Mariano Mestman (2003) have described how in the second part of the 1970s documentaries including *La hora de los hornos*, *La batalla de Chile*, *El coraje del pueblo* (1971) and *Chircales* (1965-72), through their exhibition at the Benalmádena and Huelva festivals and the Filmoteca Nacional in Madrid, came to form an inspirational part of the political and cinematic imaginary of the transition from Francoism to democracy.

One of the tasks of this chapter is to analyse the consumption and critical reception of political and *indigenista* cinema from Colombia and Bolivia since the 1960s.[2] On the one hand it will consider the films' 'primary' or intended environments of worker, peasant and indigenous audiences; on the other it will look at the wider sphere of alternative, student and festival circuits in which the films have been screened, discussed and incorporated into certain ideological frameworks. It will also consider more mainstream and institutionalised production and viewing situations such as the airing of the Ukamau Group's films on national television in Western Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, and the inclusion of some of Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva's films in the 'Maletas del cine colombiano', packages of VHS tapes released since 2002 by the

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[2] The Ukamau Group's exile films *El enemigo principal/ The Principal Enemy* (Peru, 1973) and *¡Fuera de aquí* (Ecuador, 1977) will also be considered here as part of that collective's project. As I will discuss later in this chapter, these films later tended to become incorporated into Bolivia's national cinema history.

Ministry of Culture in its bid to earn both cultural and financial capital out of the 'great works' of Colombia's national cinematography.

To separate out distribution and consumption into three separate categories of peasant/worker screenings, Latin American art-house and intellectual environments, and the European/North American film festival circuit is, of course, a largely artificial enterprise. Exhibition of Sanjinés' films in La Paz, for example, has consistently shown how relatively elite locations have been at least partly 'reclaimed' as spaces of radical political action and debate. Sanjinés himself has recounted how, in the days leading up to the 1979 elections that inaugurated a brief period of fragile civilian rule, commercial cinema managers refused to screen his films (presumably fearing violent reprisals), so the Ukamau Group 'had to tell the people of La Paz about the existence of the Cinemateca [which] had traditionally been an elite cinema, specialised, somewhat remote' (Sanjinés 1980: 58-59). These screenings' audiences comprised 'men and women of the popular classes, workers, domestic servants, all of them people who naturally had never set foot in that cinema' (1980: 60). These were occasions for working class audiences – many of them *cholo* or Indian, and many of them likely having made the short journey from the mainly Aymara city of El Alto perched atop La Paz – to watch and discuss films made by the Ukamau Group both in Bolivia (*Ukamau*, *Yawar Mallku* and *El coraje del pueblo*) and in exile (*El enemigo principal* and *¡Fuera de aquí!*). At the same time they offered national film critics such as Pedro Susz, Carlos Mesa (the Cinemateca's two founding directors) and Luis Espinal the opportunity to appreciate and write about these aesthetically accomplished and politically explosive movies that would gradually become institutionalised as part of Bolivia's national cinematographic patrimony. Meanwhile, the Cinemateca at least temporarily gained some legitimacy among the 'popular classes' as a national institution serving their interests. The five Sanjinés films shown during retrospectives in 1976 and 1979 (the

1976 instalment comprised only *Ukamau* and *Yawar Mallku*) comfortably constituted the Cinemateca's best attended screenings during its first six years of existence from 1976-1982. *El coraje del pueblo*, despite (or perhaps partly thanks to) the military's ultimately successful attempts to have it banned, almost trebled the audience of even the second most seen film, *Ukamau*, with a total audience of 31,585. The six-placed movie, Costa-Gavras' political thriller *Z*, was seen in 1979 by 7,328 people.[3] Journalist Lupe Cajías wrote twelve years later, after a 1991 screening of *Yawar Mallku*, that 'it can't be often that the Cinemateca Boliviana sees the most fashionable of the metropolitan intelligentsia rub shoulders with foreigners (both hippies and those dressed in shirt and tie), domestic servants, sweet sellers, sandwich ladies, journalists, sportspeople, housewives, students, labourers and drunkards'.[4]

The issues of distribution and exhibition were central to debates in Bolivian cinema circles, during the 1970s dictatorship of Hugo Bánzer, over the relative benefits of the explicitly militant work of Sanjinés' Ukamau Group and the so-called 'cine posible' of Ukamau Ltda, the group formed by Sanjinés' erstwhile cinematographer Antonio Eguino in the early 1970s. Eguino's company continued to work in Bolivia under the *banzerato*'s stringent censorship laws, making socially aware and politically reformist films such as *Pueblo chico/Small Town* (1974) and *Chuquiago* (1977) for large national audiences. On the other hand, the uncompromising political commitment of Sanjinés' collective came at the price of forced exile for the duration of Bánzer's rule, and a consequent lack of access to national audiences.[5] Similar polemics raged in Colombia between militant filmmakers such as Marta Rodríguez, Jorge Silva, and Carlos Álvarez on the one hand and, on the other, the likes of Lisandro Duque and Ciro Durán, who made socially committed cinema through precarious commercial and state-

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[3] Figures given by the Cinemateca Boliviana in 'La Cinemateca: los primeros seis años' (1982: 16-17).
[4] 'El éxito de Sanjinés', originally published in *La Razón*, 26 January 1991; reproduced in Gamboa ed. (1999: 159-160).
[5] By Sanjinés' own account he attempted to return to Bolivia on three occasions between 1971 and 1977, but was denied entry (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 139).

subsidised channels. Rodríguez, Silva and company eschewed the possibility of industrialised distribution to mass audiences in favour of screening their work on alternative, university and underground circuits.

However, for all that a regime as oppressive as that of Bánzer might favour a Manichean opposition between complicity and resistance, I will argue here that it would be misleading to draw a simple dichotomy between the 'authenticity' of militant cinema and the 'alienated' nature of films that are (partly) incorporated into either officialist mainstream or exoticist foreign channels. I propose that what might be called 'institutionalisation' can often more profitably be seen as a two-way process of negotiation between officialdom and oppositionality, rather than a mere neutralisation of the political impact of the 'institutionalised' films. Marvin D'Lugo distinguishes between those Latin American cineastes who in the 1960s and 1970s 'collaborat[ed] with state agencies who fostered their work as part of a national cultural project' (such as the Mexican auteurs Felipe Cazals and Paul Leduc during the Echeverría *sexenio*, or the Brazilian *Cinema Nôvo*), and those of the New Latin American Cinema who filtered auteurism through a collective, anti-state and militant filmmaking style (2003: 110-111). Yet there are instances in which the two scenarios overlap. In September 1975, with Bánzer's dictatorship in full swing, both Alfonso Gumucio Dagrón, a film critic and media activist who also collaborated in the production of *¡Fuera de aquí!*, and the cinephile Jesuit priest Luis Espinal harnessed the patriotic language of nationalist government bureaucracy in order to create a potentially oppositional cultural space, delivering speeches at the Second National Symposium on Science and Technology that argued for the need for 'a film archive that would safeguard our country's cinematographic riches' (Gumucio 1983: 297-298). The Fundación Cinemateca Boliviana eventually opened in 1976 under the auspices of the La Paz town hall, and in

the same year screened Sanjinés' first two Bolivian features, *Ukamau* and *Yawar Mallku*.

Similarly, one should not draw a simplistic divide between democratic, participatory film-events in Latin America and individualised art-house screenings in Europe. Militant, political and *indigenista* films have frequently been shown in Latin American art-house venues and even commercial cinemas in which the discussion-based film-act is not economically or practically viable. Conversely, Latin American films have also been used in grass-roots scenarios in Europe. Marta Rodríguez and her various collaborators have often coproduced their films with European non-governmental organisations such as the Dutch Acción por Colombia (*Campesinos/Peasants*), the German branch of Terre des Hommes and the French Comité Catholique Contre la Faim (*Nuestra voz de tierra*). These organisations, as well as countless other leftwing, internationalist and/or humanist bodies in Western Europe and North America, have screened Rodríguez's films as part of fundraising and consciousness-raising activities, with the movies themselves acting as springboards for wider political debates not unlike those held at Rodríguez and Silva's own screenings with peasant, worker or indigenous audiences, or as tools to facilitate projects and solidarity campaigns in Colombia.[6]

This chapter, therefore, will interrogate the interplay between local, national and international conditions of production, distribution, exhibition and reception of Colombian and Bolivian militant cinema. In 1978 the Colombian film critic Hernando Martínez Pardo contended that, by 1968, some Latin American filmmakers (in this case from Cuba and Argentina) had realised that a certain type of politically committed cinema 'received the unconditional support of leftwing European critics who were gathered in Pesaro under the banner of the Parisian May revolution' (Martínez Pardo

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[6] Conversation with Marta Rodríguez, 8 July 2004.

1978: 323). The corollary of this argument is that, as global entrepreneurs (albeit in the business of selling political ideas rather than economic products), some filmmakers of the New Latin American Cinema were influenced by the expectations and likely critical reactions of the commentators of the European festival circuit – even if only because critical approval abroad in some cases facilitated success at home, making for a more effective consciousness-raising operation.

The debates between purist militancy and assimilationist compromise are shadowed in various forms in the so-called 'Third Cinema' theoretical writing that emerged in Western Europe and North America from the early 1980s, and can be traced back to the US-based Ethiopian scholar Teshome Gabriel's seminal monograph *Third Cinema in the Third World: the aesthetics of liberation*, and the subsequent spat between Gabriel and US scholar Julianne Burton in the pages of the British film journal *Screen*.[7] Transferring the notion of purity onto a geopolitical plane, Gabriel erects a conceptual barrier between a wholly textual 'First World' political film criticism – a 'cine-structuralism [that] seeks to find immanent meaning in works whose deeper meaning is concealed' (Gabriel 1982: 5) – and the practice of Third Cinema (or Third World Cinema – in some passages he uses the two terms interchangeably). The latter, argues Gabriel, emphasises not the immanent meaning of the text itself but the relationship between film and audience, its militancy deriving not from elitist textual readings but from a *con*textual analysis. Third (World) Cinema, therefore, is a privileged category that displaces the hermetic decoding operations of European radical film theory and claims a concrete relationship with real social struggle; it 'has in fact broken the assumed semiotic system of the ideal code or grammar of cinema' (8). Burton, however, reads Gabriel's analysis as a dangerous and homogenising

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[7] Gabriel (1982); Burton (1985); Gabriel (1986). See also Cooper (1989); Thompson (1993); and Guneratne (2003).

ghettoisation of Third (World) Cinema from mainstream critical debates, stating on the contrary that

> any viable account of Third World film practices must [...] posit a relationship to dominant cinema which is continuous and contingent even in its will to discontinuity and differentiation. [...] Oppositional film-making in the Third World is therefore best described not as a "new language" but as a new practice or set of practices in constant "evolution" in response to the evolution of [First World] dominant practices. (Burton 1985: 12)

The Burton-Gabriel exchange is not quite analogous to the 1970s debates between the advocates of *cine posible* and militancy. But the comparison does serve to illustrate the rather black-and-white terms in which discussions have been carried out on both sides of the Atlantic over resistance to or compromise with an oppressive state; over whether cultural manifestations are alienating, elitist or genuinely popular; and over the rejection or acceptance of 'Western' film distribution, cinematic language and theoretical frameworks. Subsequent scholarship, for instance that of Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, has taken a more nuanced approach to the debates. Stam has reminded us that 'both first and third world traditions are heteroglossic, many-languaged; and both traditions interpenetrate each other' (Stam 1991: 232). Yet this is not cause to wholeheartedly embrace the claims by globalisation's ideologues who speak of the free, unmediated and non-hierarchical play of cultures, nor to discard altogether the notion of a global system of economic and cultural exchange that favours the more 'developed' countries over what we still might term, for want of a better phrase, the 'Third World'. Neither should we dismiss the continuing struggles of those outside the Western world:

> Thinkers from the center, blithely confident in national power and international projection, denounce peripheral nationalism as atavistic and passe [sic.]. Metropolitan writers announce the "death of the author" just as peripheral writers begin to win an international audience, and metropolitan filmmakers call for the "fin de cinema" just as third world nations begin to create viable film industries...It is normal that post-colonials working in the first world would speak of multiple and superimposed palimpsestic identities, of hybridity and syncretism, and just as normal that those filmmakers and theorists who see a community

> under threat, for whom the very idea of identity is an indispensible [sic.] tool for liberatory mobilization, should speak with more urgent voices of the need to nourish and stimulate the memory and activism of the community. (Stam 1991: 235-236)

As I will discuss below, Jorge Sanjinés and Marta Rodríguez have played very different roles in the audiovisual spheres of contemporary Bolivia and Colombia respectively, as have indigenous video-making movements in both countries in recent years. But none of this work blindly defends, or has ever blindly defended, the idea that the imagined national community is necessarily the best framework from which to struggle; and its creators have looked on the notions of individual authorship and national film industries with a critical and sceptical eye. What films such as Marta Rodríguez and Fernando Restrepo's *Una casa sola se vence/An Empty House Cracks* (2004) and Jorge Sanjinés' *Los hijos del último jardín/The Last Garden* (2003) share with the work of indigenous video-making organisations such as CEFREC [8] (based in La Paz) or the Sol y Tierra Foundation in Cauca, Colombia, is the consciousness that political advancement is impossible, or at best fragile, without a creative harnessing of cultural identities, be it through the criteria of community, class, ethnicity or nation. These films' often treacherous production and distribution procedures are testament to the need to carve out and make use of, if not film industries in the conventional sense of the word, then at least networks (often international in nature) via which films can be financed and disseminated. If they do not always claim to be works of 'intrinsic' aesthetic value, they do have a keen awareness that their idiom must be in keeping with the social, political and cultural values of their audiences if they are to be successful (and success is hardly ever measured in economic terms).

One of the aims of this chapter, and of the thesis as a whole, is to encourage an understanding of political and indigenous cinemas from Colombia and Bolivia from a perspective that acknowledges and upholds their right to lay claim to identities that are

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[8] Centro de Formación y Realización Cinematográfica (Centre for Cinematographic Training and Production).

necessarily selective and exclusionary in nature. Yet in viewing these films, one does not need to take the same approach to cultural identity as that exemplified (or parodied) by Alain Aubert in the opening page of this chapter, which sees the protagonists of Latin American films as a distant, exotic and ready-made revolutionary category to which we can attribute pre-fabricated values and ideas. This is almost certainly not the way in which they are used by those who make and feature in them. Following Stuart Hall in his theoretical writing on black Caribbean and diasporic cultures, I speak here not of a 'naturalist' cultural identification 'constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal', but of a 'strategic and positional' identification that is 'a construction, a process never completed – always "in process"' (Hall 1996: 2-3). Many of the films and videos under consideration in this thesis – and this includes many of those made when the revolutionary 'certainties' of the 1960s and 1970s were still widespread – dramatise or embody national, continental, ethnic or class-based communities' processes of becoming, the probing of their limits and the wondering where they might go next. By placing them in their historical contexts, and by critically assessing the aesthetic decisions and values that lie behind them, I hope that this work will lead to a better understanding of the ways in which those communities are configured, and of the ways in which 'we', as outsiders, might relate to them.

The dream of two continents

It has become a commonplace to consider that the various oppositional filmmaking practices that coalesced around meetings, film festivals and magazines from the late 1960s, under such banners as 'New Latin American Cinema' and 'Third Cinema', as being predicated on the twin principles of an aesthetic upheaval in opposition to 'Western' artistic forms and a political commitment to using cinema as a weapon of

radical social change. Such modernist fervour has led studies such as that of the Spanish critic Andrés Linares to proclaim, in Bolivarian style, that political cinema in Latin America was the artistic vanguard of a 'great nation waiting to be born', as if it were the aesthetic expression of a unified ideological project.[9] The head of the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC) Alfredo Guevara was understandably keen to claim a leading role for the Cuban revolution in this continental nation-building battlefield, announcing that 'we, Latin American cineastes, patriots of our great Latin American fatherland, which José Martí called Our America, can with our work help bring forth the task of national liberation' (Guevara 1977: 37). In a speech marking the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 Viña del Mar festival, Guevara's bombastic prose personified the New Latin American Cinema as the heroic avatar of a budding utopian society:

> In [the Viña del Mar festival of] 1967 [...] the blood of Che [Guevara] renewed history, enabled us to purify the meaning of militancy, and allowed *the New Latin American Cinema, which found itself for the first time on American soil*, to revive the sacred bond between militancy and poetry. There is no possible transformation without that first communion, without that immersion in poetry.[10]

The invocation of Che here points to Cuba's centrality to the New Latin American Cinema, which has always relied on a combination of ideological conviction, political convenience, artistic respect and economic necessity. The ideological banner of the Cuban Revolution, logistical assistance from ICAIC and the critical oxygen provided by its internationally-distributed *Cine cubano* journal were welcomed by collectives such as the Ukamau Group and Fundación Cine Documental, who could draw neither political or aesthetic inspiration nor institutional cinematographic support from within their own countries. By the time Guevara spoke the words cited above, the 'New Latin American Cinema' had long since been institutionalised under the aegis of the Havana Festival of New Latin American Cinema, which since its inception in 1979 had sought to industrialise anti-imperialist cinemas, in the face of growing political

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[9] In the original Spanish, 'una gran nación en potencia'. Linares, 1976: p.139.
[10] Reprinted in the Colombian film journal *Arcadia va al cine* (Guevara 1988; my emphasis).

repression continent-wide by rightwing dictatorships and the global downturn in cinema attendance with the rise of television and home video. But Cuba was suffering its own financial crisis at this time, as the Cold War and Cuba's USSR sponsors ground to a standstill and European coproduction was increasingly the only option available to Latin American filmmakers. Perhaps in an effort to loosen the noose around the neck of modernist anti-imperialist filmmaking, filmmakers, bureaucrats, festival organisers, critics and academics alike set about 'imagining' Latin America as a space of radical modernist aesthetic and political practice. They began to conduct their own, theoretical institutionalisation of 'New Latin American Cinema' or 'Third Cinema', equating (as did the French critics of the 1970s) militancy with purity, national and continental authenticity, and enshrining it within a Latin American tradition of quality.[11]

Writing in the late 1980s, the British critic Paul Willemen projected his own belief in the continuing relevance of an 'emancipatory mass culture' onto the increasingly open (at least in Anglophone critical circles) category of 'Third Cinema', referring now to oppositional filmmaking from Latin America, Africa and Asia, again emphasising the sense of a rounded and unified aesthetic project that sniped at industrialised or mainstream Western aesthetics from diverse points of the globe. Quoting Andreas Huyssen's analysis of the fate of the 1930s European avant-gardes, he lamented that 'the legitimate place of a cultural avant-garde which once carried with it the utopian hope for an emancipatory mass culture under socialism has been pre-empted by the rise of mass-mediated culture and its supporting industries and institutions'.[12] For

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[11] For the institutionalisation of the New Latin American Cinema via the Havana festival, see Pick (1993: introduction). For the movement's crisis from the 1980s onwards, see Aufderheide (2000: 238-256). Even so, writing in 1985, Chanan (1997c) reported that ICAIC was still in relatively good financial health, thanks to low production costs, and the absence of 'value-added' infrastructure such as distributors and retailers that cream off profits in capitalist economies. For film criticism seeking out a historiography of quality militant art see, for instance, Scorza (1981) and Nogueras (1982). The Bolivia-based critic Luis Espinal might also be seen in this light, his reviews frequently waxing lyrical about the plastic qualities and anti-imperialist politics of Sanjinés' films, drawing comparisons with classical cinema and theatre. See, for instance, the collection of his writings gathered in Mesa (1982).

[12] Willemen, 1989: 12, citing Andreas Huyssen (1986) *After the Great Divide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p.15.

Willemen, oppositional Latin American cinemas (a category that merges here with 'Latin American, Asian and African' cinemas) were to be celebrated for their unique ability to negotiate with and defeat the nefarious practices of this 'mass-mediated culture':

> Since the culture industry has become extremely adept at orchestrating emotionality while deliberately atrophying desire for understanding and intellectuality, it makes sense for the Latin American avant-gardes to emphasise lucidity and the cognitive aspects of cultural work, thus reversing the hierarchy between the cognitive and the emotive, while of course maintaining the need to involve both. (Willemen 1989: 13)

Once Teshome Gabriel had opened up the Third Cinema playing field with his 1982 monograph (see above), at least for Anglophone critics, 1980s writers such as Armes (1987) and Willemen (1989) took up the opportunity to delineate Latin America specifically, or the Third World generally, as regions whose audiovisual spheres had marched (or were still marching) forward in a seemingly teleological progression from alienated Hollywood-style industries and introspective auteurism, towards authentically national militancy. The models that such critics invoked were inspired on the one hand by Solanas and Getino's original 'three cinemas' formulation, and on the other, by Gabriel's model of ideological decolonisation (itself borrowed from Fanon) through the stages of assimilation, return to the source and, finally, the combative stage (Gabriel 1982: ch. 2, and Gabriel 2000).[13] Mike Wayne (2001) went further still in extending the category of Third Cinema to a whole swathe of non-Third World films. Jonathan Buschsbaum (2001) has strongly protested against this tendency though, calling for a return to the original postulates of Solanas and Getino's 'Third Cinema' that emphasised lucidity as a function of cinema's role in intervening in society, not as an aesthetic end in itself aimed at establishing a place for Third Cinema in the radical

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[13] Armes, having taken on the difficult task of theorising 'Third World Filmmaking' in its entirety, came to the astonishing conclusion that 'what seems borne out by the present study is the extent to which it is possible to generalize about developments occurring in geographically disparate societies and over a time-span of several decades – despite the obvious distinctions of particular cultural traditions and the varieties of external pressure and dominance' (1987: p.306).

(European) critical tradition. Antony Guneratne (2003: 1-28) has recently made a valiant attempt to 'rescue' Third Cinema from oblivion as 'the only major branch of film theory that did not originate within a specifically Euro-American context' (2003: 7). However, as he himself accepts, and as the huge range of approaches embraced by his contributors attest, the very strength of what is termed 'Third Cinema' is its insistence on the fact that theory must be determined by praxis, thereby constantly deflecting any attempt to pin it down as a timeless, historical and immutable artistic school. Even so, the glut of writing on the 'New Latin American Cinema' and 'Third Cinema' emanating from the Anglo-American academy over the last twenty years makes it extremely difficult to see films such as those made by the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental through anything other than these critical and historical lenses.[14] While this thesis recognises the crucial role of those 'movements' within 'Third Cinema' discourse, it also attempts to widen the critical and theoretical angle from which the films of the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental are analysed.

As Octavio Getino and Susana Velleggia point out, 'any periodisation of historical phenomena implies a conception of the world' (2002: 21). The definition of 'New Latin American Cinema' and 'Third Cinema' thus depends on the analyst's historical, geographical and political standpoint. Following Raymond Williams' notion of 'selective tradition', Getino and Velleggia intimate that the New Latin American Cinema's history is not immutable, for the particular ways in which the historian configures films' ruptures with the political and the aesthetic past are contingent on her own ideological interests (2002: 17-25). It is far beyond the scope of the present study

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[14] Recent approaches, however, have begun to question the New Latin American Cinema and Third Cinema teleologies. See, for instance, the studies by Dolores Tierney (2004) and Gabriela Alemán (2004) on 'trash' genres such as exploitation and horror, produced contemporaneously with militant cinema but receiving little or no critical attention. Tierney sustains that 'because of the way it [sic.] circulates in Europe and the United States in art cinemas, university courses and film journals, the New Latin American Cinemas simultaneously belong to whilst nominally rejecting "elite" culture [...] hence there is a cultural capital not in marginality itself but in a *certain kind* of marginality'. (2004: 73)

to detail precisely how these 'movements', or the sense in which they might constitute movements, came about. In light of the above discussion, though, it seems fair to say that their discursive crystallisation as a coherent set of politically oppositional and aesthetically innovative practices seems to have had as much to do with the discourses of the likes of Alain Aubert, Teshome Gabriel and Julianne Burton, produced outside Latin America, as it has with the practical and theoretical developments within the region itself.

To be sure, as Pick (1993) and López (1997) persuasively argue, we can justifiably seek out the points of origin and precursors of the New Latin American Cinema, such as the 1967 Viña del Mar festival in Chile, or the 1958 SODRE festival in Uruguay, from which to trace a coherent continental movement of like-minded filmmakers forging a coordinated campaign for an autonomous, sometimes nationalist, and almost always 'continentalist', liberatory art.[15] It is important, though, to bear in mind the crucial role of European forums from the very start. López argues that a discussion chaired by Edgar Morin at the 1962 Festival of Latin American Cinema in Sestri Levante (Italy) 'served to situate the filmmaking projects and problems of individual nations in the context of the entire hemisphere and it further allowed for important contacts to be established among filmmakers working in markedly different national cinematic conjunctures' (López 1997: 147). Faced with the repression and generally harsh conditions faced by filmmakers in Latin America, Alfredo Guevara (1963: 55) described Sestri Levante as 'a land of surprises', 'almost a miracle' that united the films that, 'brought together, forge the cinematic image of our continent'. Ten

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[15] Pick maintains that the movement has found its strength in strategically anchoring itself at once in 'elements specific to national formations' and in 'supranational projects', allowing its 'self defining consciousness' to take root in a myriad of political and ideological scenarios (1993: p.2). Most accounts of the New Latin American Cinema, focusing on thematic and methodological concerns, identify the movement's founding moments in films such as *Tire Die/Throw Us a Dime* (dir. Fernando Birri, Argentina, 1958) and the Brazilian Cinema Novo of the early 1960s. For good genealogies of the New Latin American Cinema, see Rich (1997) and López (1997). However Octavio Getino, focusing rather on the economic aspect of Latin American cinema's historic attempts to forge autonomy through regional co-operation, looks back as far as the Congreso del Cine Hispanoamericano in Madrid in 1931 (Getino 1996: 183).

years later, however, Sanjinés dismissed European festivals as 'intellectual supermarkets' complicit with 'those who make art a consumer product, a mere spectacle' and irrelevant to the 'struggle for liberation'.[16] Still, we should not forget their hand in consolidating the networks that gave shape to the movement that has framed much of the Ukamau Group's work. It is worth noting that in the Cinemateca Boliviana's collection of press clippings on Sanjinés' work – itself part of the New Latin American Cinema's historical record – the dossiers on his exile films *El enemigo principal* (Peru, 1973) and *¡Fuera de aquí!* (Ecuador, 1977) consist mainly of cuttings from the European (mainly French) publications and festivals that lent continuity to a movement shattered by the South American military dictatorships of the 1970s. As Pick (1993: ch. 6) points out, such geographical displacements tended to force Latin American intellectuals to occupy the public sphere and thus represent their national predicaments even more forcefully than when based at home, handing extra-Latin American intellectual forums a crucial pivotal role in consolidating the oppositional Latin American project.

All things considered, it would be naïve to suppose that Latin American filmmakers' negotiations with their 'Western' counterparts have not been mediated by unequal relations of global power. In our task of unearthing the origins and unfolding of artistic movements – particularly ones concerned with the inequality of cultural exchange between one world region and another – we would do well to bear in mind Teshome Gabriel's warning against the assumptions enshrined within Western academia of the neutrality of its own disclosures on other(/Other) cultural systems:

> A dialogue between the West and the Third World is always a welcome endeavour. But what may block such efforts is the historical mishap they suffered and are locked into, namely colonialism and imperialism. This has made reciprocity and peaceful co-existence difficult to achieve [...] It is the conflictual one-sidedness of the West that defeats and frustrates meaningful communication, because of its unceasing desire for colonial

[16] Quoted in Nascetti 1972: 19. Interview originally published in Spanish in the Uruguayan magazine *Marcha*, 14 January 1972.

> enclaves as well as cultural synchronisation with itself. *The barrier to real dialogue is thus the terms of dialogue itself.* Consequently, in its desire to globalise and homogenise world cinema and cultures, critical theory is implicated. (Gabriel 1986: 141, emphasis in original)

If Gabriel's argument tends towards the Manichean in its characterisation of 'Western' critical theory and 'Third World' discourses as being locked in some intractable textual colonial war, it does serve to underline the fact that critics, theorists and film festival organisers from North America and Europe (both East and West) have not always acted purely out of disinterested humanist enthusiasm, for even as they discuss and celebrate Latin American 'peripheral' cinemas they reinforce their own status as the world centre of film production. Felix Thompson suggests that in both Gabriel's and Burton's work 'geographical boundaries are expected to mark distinct sets of cultural boundaries even if there is no suggestion of some kind of absolute dividing line', and that such dualisms 'might be oversimplifications which in some cases reinforce the cultural domination which is supposed to be overturned' (1993: 40, 52).

Brazilian film historian Paulo Antonio Paranaguá has criticised European and North American critics alike for their exoticist fascination with Third Cinema, whereby the politicised work of the 1960s and 1970s is seen as the defining moment in the continent's film history (2000: 123-149). European and North American accounts of Latin American production thus privilege those cinemas that, like Solanas and Getino's 'Third Cinema', García Espinosa's 'Imperfect Cinema', or Sanjinés' 'Cinema with the People', assume the metropolitan ('First', 'Perfect' or commercial) cinema to be the planetary cinematic norm around which 'peripheral' or 'Third World' cinemas can orbit at will, albeit in fierce rejection of its gravitational pull.[17]

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[17] However as Pick pointed out in 1981, when 'national' histories such as those of Martínez Pardo (1978), Gumucio (1983) and Mesa (1985) were only just becoming widespread, this was partly a consequence of Latin America's own lack of knowledge of its own cinematic past, due to the scarcity of both film preservation and research resources: 'A "global" history, a Latin American "Sadoul", will never be written. The result of all this is that we only know the cinema of the 60s and 70s, which we might call the 'heroic period', the period of great development and flourishing, when the violence and underdevelopment of the Latin American continent exploded onto the world's screens as a cinema of denunciation, of decolonisation'. (1981: 136).

If, then, French film critics in the 1970s and British and North American academics in the 1980s and 1990s have celebrated, theorised and periodised Latin American cinema according to a pantheon of politically radical and aesthetically innovative texts and practices, their own critical operations, as well as the language in which they are conducted, themselves hold a self-legitimating stake in the establishment of a tradition. Anti-imperialist cinema – whose inherently oppositional nature has been described by Ana López as its political strength and its economic weakness[18] – may be able to tell us Europeans something useful about our own approach to political aesthetics or about our understanding of Latin America. But faced with indigenous video-makers who define themselves as epistemologically separate from the West, rather than engaged with and opposed to it, North American and European Film Studies have remained almost silent. As I will explore in more detail in Chapter 5, metropolitan critics and academics are by no means entirely to blame for this situation: the localised goals and the technological, financial and promotional mechanisms of indigenous video ensures that *videastas* can operate with relatively autonomy, meaning that they have only a limited need to take recourse to international distribution campaigns. It is perhaps the one-sided nature of Western colonialist discourse of which Gabriel speaks that indigenous filmmakers have, with much success, sought to avoid.[19]

In foregrounding the confrontation between racial identity and class-centric Marxism, the films brought to Europe by the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental – unlike many of their New Latin American Cinema contemporaries – betrayed some of the fault lines in the European left's universalising claims to holding the key to international liberation. Writing in the catalogue of an exhibition of short

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[18] 'A cinema designed to subvert, demystify, and challenge the dominant cinema, common-sensical development assumptions, and political givens is marginal almost by definition and not particularly concerned with commercial imperatives'. López, 1997: 151.

[19] Freya Schiwy's work on indigenous video in Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia is a valuable exception to 'metropolitan' Film Studies' ignorance of indigenous video. Taking a theoretical framework inspired by the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, Schiwy (2002a and 2003) steers well clear of the homogenising discourse of which Gabriel speaks. For comparative accounts of militant *indigenista* cinema and recent indigenous video, see Marta Rodríguez (2002) and Schiwy (unpublished).

films from Latin America in New York in 1992, Julianne Burton described film curatorship as one more manifestation of the Western urge to 'collect' culture: one more attempt, born out of 'recollection and desire, of nostalgia and utopian projection', to pin down 'the authenticity which the West so ardently seeks in the surrogacy of "exotic" cultures' (1992: 24). When Sanjinés' debut film *Ukamau* first hit European screens (it won the Critics' Prize and the Young Directors' Prize at Cannes, 1967 and the Flaherty Prize at Locarno in the same year) some critics were certainly enthralled with the immediacy with which the celluloid image enabled them to experience a pastoral fantasy of pre-industrial innocence.[20] Even if the film's ending portrays its Aymara protagonist Andrés as an active and thinking subject, French critic Marcel Martin basked in the romantic idyll of this 'beautiful film, specifically Indian and [...] pure of any "European" influence, of any intellectualism, of any formalism', and praised its 'spellbinding atmosphere' and 'remarkable authenticity' (1967a). In a brilliant (if probably unintentional) gloss of the paradoxes and contradictions over racial conflict that characterise the film, Martin (seemingly no specialist in Bolivia or Bolivian cinema) claimed that *Ukamau* was both 'typically national' (1967a: 16) *and* 'pre-Columbian', offering us 'an image of Bolivia that might be one of America before the arrival of the Spaniards' (1967b). Martin's romantic Eurocentric imaginary, it would seem, slipped the fantasy of indigenous purity over the entire Bolivian nation (and perhaps by extension Latin America).

For these critics, and surely for many spectators, *Ukamau* seems to have fulfilled an 'ethnographic' function not unlike Hollywood's depictions of far-off lands and ancient times that, for Shohat and Stam, serve to 'initiate the Western spectator into an unknown culture', and in which 'the spectator [...] comes to master, in a remarkably

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[20] Even so, *Ukamau* was not the first home-grown portrayal of indigenous Andean peoples that had arrived on Europe's screens. These critics may well have seen films made by the Bolivian Jorge Ruiz and the Peruvian Cusco School, which won prizes in Italy, Spain and the Czech Republic in the 1950s and 1960s.

telescoped period of time, the codes of a foreign culture shown as simple, unselfconscious, and susceptible to facile apprehension' (1994: 148). For another French critic, who commented that 'the rhythm is as slow as the lives of these beings still so close to nature' (Prédal 1967), *Ukamau* could be celebrated as a work of artistic achievement only because its aesthetics aped the timeless primitive nature of its protagonists. Such visions performed another of Shohat and Stam's infantilising 'tropes of empire':

> [...] the reduction of the cultural to the biological, the tendency to associate the colonized with the vegetative and the instinctual rather than with the learned and the cultural. [...] Colonized people are projected as body rather than mind, much as the colonized world was seen as raw material rather than as mental activity and manufacture. [...] Europe always keeps its place at the apex of a value-laden hierarchy. (1994: 138-139)

Thus even as Prédal expresses his solidarity with a nascent Third World cinema, he subtly pins that cinema's aesthetics and its protagonists to the bottom of the global epistemological heap, naturalising the link between the Third World, the primitive and the colonised.

Subsequent European criticism of the films of the Ukamau Group and of the Fundación Cine Documental has not usually suffered from the same degree of paternalistic exoticism that characterised writing on *Ukamau*, but accounts of these and other Latin American films have usually displayed some form of 'utopian projection' such as Burton describes. The fact that many of the films focus on indigenous struggles, and the fact that their directors tended to speak to European interviewers in such generalising terms as to suggest they were the Indians' international revolutionary ambassadors, meant that the work of these two collectives particularly lent themselves to European writers' nostalgic fancies. The indigenous communities that travelled the world in Sanjinés' and Rodríguez's films were converted into signifiers of Latin American telluric authenticity in the face of Western imperialism and its violent

Eurocentric doctrines. As Michael Chanan's 1983 documentary *Cinema of the Humble* testifies, indigenous peoples, in all their silence, marginality and misery, were seen both in Europe and in Latin America as standing for the entire continent; for the radical left on both sides of the Atlantic they were symbols of Latin America's oppression, its 'otherness', its search for identity.

Yet if for Latin American intellectuals these films were part of a Guevarist process of trying to discover the 'true' national or continental 'reality', for some Europeans, for whom Latin America still seemed a distant, homogeneous land, these films served simply to consolidate the 'universal' truths of anti-imperialist but Eurocentric politics. In the case of *Enemigo*, Sanjinés told one French newspaper that he merely hoped the film would help Indian peasants understand 'the workings of power, of the mechanisms of power, of superstructures'; but this did not prevent the paper's editors from heading the interview with the rather bombastic headline, 'What chance do peasants have of learning Marxism?' ('Un film bolivien…'). Another article announced that while for Bolivians, *Enemigo* 'is about discovering that for them, with their miserable and isolated lives, the principal enemy is the United States; for us, it's about becoming aware that that vague idea that we know well can be verified *even* in a miserable and isolated village. What it's really about is the need to believe in international revolution. (Grant and Frot-Coutaz 1975: 77-78)

Yet *Enemigo* is in fact far subtler than many critics gave it credit for, weighing up as it does the pros and cons of an indigenous community's collaboration with Marxist guerrillas, and concluding that without a good degree of mutual cultural understanding, such a project was doomed to failure. Indeed, from the other end of the Marxist spectrum, a 1975 article in *Cinéthique* scoops up and ejects the remnants of the romantic primitivism that lie beneath Grant and Frot-Coutaz's comments, replacing it with a no less totalising class determinism. The piece attacks both *Coraje* and *Enemigo*

for their 'defeatist' approach to revolution, accusing them of militating against the 'universal laws' that people will always resist exploitation and oppression; will organise themselves in such a manner to bring this to fruition; and will always 'enrich their struggle and their organisation through [...] the systematised experience in Marxist-Leninism of the struggles of all peoples' (*Cinéthique* 1975: 56-58).

Nonetheless, all of these critics seem united in the belief that *Enemigo* either does, or should, inform Bolivian peasants of a political truth of which they were not aware, and that only an outsider such as Sanjinés (Bolivian but educated in European thought) is, or should be, capable of telling them.[21] It is a small step indeed from here to Edward Said's reading of a Eurocentric Karl Marx, for whom the Orient was 'an element in a Romantic redemptive project' that sought to 'regenerat[e] a fundamentally lifeless Asia' (Said 2003: 154). Sanjinés' tendency to endow his indigenous protagonists with the power to illustrate by synecdoche the problems of the whole of 'our Indian America' (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 11) helped European critics to absorb them as representing a distant, homogenised mass that consolidated their political beliefs, just as for Marx, 'the collective Orient was easier for him to use in illustration of a theory than existential human identities' (Said 2003: 155).

At the same time that critics took the films as confirmation of their political beliefs, they tended to play down their own presence as ideologically-laden intellectual intermediaries. A two-page interview with Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva published in *Écran* magazine in 1973 focuses almost entirely on the bare facts of the actual and potential linkages between Colombian Indians and the political left, giving the impression that their film *Planas* (the main focus of the piece) is little more than a

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[21] Even though *Enemigo* was conceived and made in Peru (a fact acknowledged earlier in Grant and Frot-Coutaz's piece) both articles describe the film as Bolivian, or made for Bolivians. Sanjinés' continentalist outlook, which tended to elide rather than emphasise differences between Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, seemingly had the effect in Europe of contributing to the idea of a homogeneous Latin America. His didactic intent, though, was perhaps less one-directional than the headline quoted above would suggest: in that same interview the director gives a long explanation of the strategic contradictions of a guerrilla strategy that fails to take into account the fighters' economic, political and cultural differences with indigenous peasants.

treatise on (in Silva's own words) 'the importance of Indians in the revolutionary process' (Marcel Martin 1973). In contrast, interviews published in Latin American magazines tended to address wider issues such as film language, methodology. indigenous cosmology, or Rodríguez and Silva's position in relation to other militant Latin American filmmaking movements. [22] In Martin's interview the questions are edited out as though Rodríguez and Silva's comments were an unmediated flow of ideas: the pretence of placing the Third World director on a level playing field betrays, in Ana López's words, the editorial desire to achieve an 'unattainable objectivity' (1991: 243). As López notes in her critique of Julianne Burton's edited volume of interviews with Latin American filmmakers (Burton ed., 1986), such a layout means the interviewer deliberately 'fails to incorporate his/her otherness into the text' and thus gives the impression that the published text gives its readers access to a pure distillation of the interviewees' ideas (López 1991: 243). Furthermore, by privileging the directors' voices over all those others that arise from these self-avowedly dialogical film-texts, the interview format itself underscores the sense that these 'authored' films somehow conveyed the 'truth' about distant Third World realities.

Textual operations

The assumption that a film, or the critical baggage surrounding it, can or should be able to employ an ideologically neutral discourse while at the same time being an object of aesthetic beauty gives us a clue as to the theoretical interests lying behind European writers' interests in the films of the Ukamau Group, Fundación Cine Documental and other Latin American directors and collectives. When French critics lauded such films as *Yawar Mallku* and *El enemigo principal* for avoiding self-regarding introspection and

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[22] See, for instance, 'Colombia, la memoria popular' (1977), published in the Venezuelan journal *Cine al día*, and Valverde (1977), in the Colombian *Cinemateca* magazine.

'illusory formalist speculations', they hinted at a major concern in 1960s and 1970s French, British and US film criticism.[23] Particularly following the student and worker uprisings of May 1968, François Truffaut's 'politique des auteurs' of 1954, which had informed much of *Cahiers du Cinéma*'s criticism of the 1950s and 1960s, and which was rejected so forcefully by many Latin American filmmakers, was seen by radical 'First World' critics as a dangerous separation of film from ideology – a hierarchical celebration of a director's timeless, unified and transcendental spiritual vision, or 'a justification, couched in aesthetic terms, of a culturally conservative, politically reactionary attempt to remove film from the realm of social and political concern' (Hess 1974, 1: 19). At the same time, the cinematic realism advocated by André Bazin – also in the pages of *Cahiers* – came under attack from a new modernist current, whose function was to 'challeng[e] realism as a particular mode of aesthetic cognition coextensive with the general ideology proffered by the triumph of capitalism in the nineteenth century'.[24]

Thus many of those critics opposed to auteurism and realism concentrated on debating what Peter Wollen termed the 'two avant-gardes', each of which in its own way tried to forge a new cinematic practice that would short-circuit narrative cinema's complicity with bourgeois ideology. The first avant-garde was a radical modernism that prioritised the signified and focused on problems of political meaning within narrative; the second, a 'painterly' tradition of radical aesthetics that sought to achieve 'pure' signifiers that ultimately suppressed the signified.[25] In this rather polarised theoretical scenario, advocates of the militantly non-representational 'painterly' tradition of Man

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[23] See, for instance, 'Jorge Sanjinés: le vol du condor' (1969); Hennebelle (1975); and Grant and Frot-Coutaz (1975).

[24] David Rodowick (1988: 17), paraphrasing Stephen Heath's *The Nouveau Roman: a study in the practice of writing* (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1972). The work of Heath, himself influenced by the French *Tel Quel* group, was central to the development of 'political modernist' film theory. For Rodowick the most crucial tenet of political modernism, a term which he borrows from Sylvia Harvey, is that '*the possibility of a radical, political text is conditioned by the necessity of an avant-garde representational strategy*; or more precisely, strategies emphasizing the material nature of language or cinematic presentation' (1988: 12, emphasis in original).

[25] See Wollen (1975) and, for his subsequent reconfiguration of the two avant-gardes, Wollen (1981).

Ray, Hans Richter and the European and American film Co-op movements, were attacked for their formal idealism, taking their art onto a purely symbolic, spiritual or formalist plane that risked removing art from the social world altogether, and perpetuating bourgeois art's hierarchical tradition of artistic quality. On the other hand those speaking up for the former (radical modernist) avant-garde, celebrating the Soviet montage school and Jean-Luc Godard among others, were criticised for their idealisation of content that was ultimately underpinned by a search for some form of (revolutionary) realism that ran counter to modernism's prime concerns.[26]

In turn the likes of Godard's Dziga Vertov Group and Chris Marker's SLON group were criticised in post-May 1968 France by Dynadia, a filmmaking group linked to the French Communist Party, who had an instrumentalist view of art as a neutral and universal category that should be employed directly in the service of the Communist Party's propaganda work. They therefore had no time for the materialist experiments of the likes of Godard and Marker, who believed that

> the domain of art, or of cultural production, was itself one of the domains (or, perhaps more properly, one of the dimensions) of class struggle; that it was not a question of saving up some existing entity called 'art' to be handed over to the working class, but rather that the domain of cultural production was already an area of struggle between competing ideas, and often mutually contradictory systems of values and beliefs, and it was the task of those on the left engaged in cultural production to enter into and to intensify these struggles. (Harvey 1978: 32)

Much discussion in radical European film theory, then, was centred on the question of how to create a revolutionary art that both undermined the mimetic signifying strategies of mainstream bourgeois aesthetics, *and* intervened directly in the ideological and social spheres, as well as being sufficiently pleasurable and accessible to be useful to the masses. Brechtian aesthetics became de rigeur in political cinema circles both in Europe and in Latin America, where filmmakers such as Jorge Sanjinés and Julio García Espinosa were inspired by the German playwright's didactic dramatic

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[26] See Rodowick (1988: ch. 2) for the background and development of these discussions.

form that sought social renewal through an art of intellectual engagement rather than of hypnotic emotion:

> How can the theatre be both instructive and entertaining? How can it be divorced from the spiritual dope traffic and turned from a home of illusions to a home of experiences? How can the unfree, ignorant man of our century, with his thirst for freedom and his hunger for knowledge; how can the tortured and heroic, abused and ingenious, changeable and world-changing man of this great and ghastly century obtain his own theatre which will help him to master the world and himself?[27]

It is easy to see how a film such as *El enemigo principal* (one of the Ukamau Group's films that received the most critical attention abroad) might have been taken up by those critics seeking a Brechtian avant-garde, or political modernist, aesthetic that avoided idealism of both content and form, and that broke down conventional film language without surrendering its audience. Each of *Enemigo*'s episodes begins with a résumé by the narrator Saturnino Huillca of the coming sequence, thereby bypassing dramatic tension; and many scenes eschew close-ups and montage in favour of long sequence shots which 'create a distance that lends itself to serene objectivity. That distance is freedom to think' (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau, 1979: p.64). Huillca's frequent interventions serve to eliminate tension and to emphasise the constructed nature of the narrative (see Sanjinés, 1989), and the jerky hand-held sequence shots almost construct the cinematographer as a participant in the action. But both here and in *La nación clandestina* (see Chapter 4), as well as allowing us to reflect on the film's political implications with 'serene objectivity', these same slow, ponderous sequence shots entice the viewer into reflecting more deeply on their pure aesthetic qualities: they grant us more time to contemplate their framing, their composition, the subtle combinations of natural and manmade light that play on the protagonists' faces. Sanjinés might lead us to believe that it was the indigenous audiences who reacted 'correctly' to the films, discussing only their political implications, while bourgeois

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[27] On Experimental Theatre (1959), in Brecht (1964: 130-135).

student or festival audiences were capable only of appreciating their pictorial qualities.[28] Yet, as Brecht emphasised particularly in later years, Sanjinés also accepted the practical impossibility of separating objective reflection from subjective involvement, suggesting that political meaning and aesthetic hypnosis were inextricable rather than opposed:

> In written language [...] a reader can re-read a passage, underline something of interest, but a viewer has no choice than to accept all the images that are continuously put up in front of him. [...] Faced with this kind of knowledge, the spectator's commitment cannot be won by objective means alone. His allegiance must also be obtained on a subjective level, his emotions must be appealed to in order to achieve his solidarity, to make him identify on a human level by having him participate in the events he sees, to force him to comprehend a problem through his own experience. That is how his deepest and most committed powers of reflection can be unleashed.[29]

Speaking of his experiences working on the set of *¡Fuera de aquí!*, Alfonso Gumucio has reflected that while Sanjinés' writings set out his aesthetic theories as though determined by given philosophical concepts, they were in fact 'mandated by circumstance'. The sequence shot, for instance, arose out of a need to respect the spontaneity of 'historical' (non-professional) actors' performances, which would be broken were a scene to be filmed in several different shots. Moreover 'to direct historical actors as one would direct professional or conventional actors is to denaturalize them' and 'close-ups would be intrusive, fragmenting the integrity of the action' (1986: 268). Similarly, Sanjinés has pointed out that the presence of the narrator in *Enemigo* originates in the *cuentista* (storyteller) of Andean popular culture who performs a synthesis of the story before narrating the details, thereby eliminating suspense (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau, 1979: 111). Even so, the savvy and eloquence

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[28] In a letter to Alfonso Gumucio Dagrón, Sanjinés wrote that during screenings of *Enemigo* in a Quechua community, 'the peasants passionately discussed not the virtues of the film itself (as occurs in any bourgeois environment) but the virtues of the historical experience of which the film forms a part, thus analysing the errors of that experience, of that historical event'. A week later two protestant missionaries were taken hostage by the community. He noted that student audiences tended to see the film as a finished product, 'a *foquista* thesis', rather than as a springboard for debate. See Gumucio and Quezada (1975).

[29] Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau (1979: 107); originally published in *Cahiers du Cinéma* as Huleu *et al* (1974).

with which Sanjinés expressed his ideas to both European and Latin American critics (although apparently not so much to indigenous audiences) in Brechtian and Althusserian terms demonstrates his readiness to have his films welcomed into an international (extra-Latin American) militant cinema tradition. Robert Stam has somewhat sceptically proposed that in comparison with 'dominant' cinema, 'Third Cinema, [Teshome] Gabriel rightly points out, tends to be less psychologistic, but this fact might have as much to do with the dissemination of Brechtian ideas in the Third World as it has to do with the communitarian values of oral cultures' (1991: p.232). To what extent this is true is in a way immaterial; what matters here is that the Ukamau Group's films appear, at least partly by design, to have derived their formal structures from indigenous Andean cultures while at the same time fulfilling the dreams of politicised European and European-oriented film theorists.

The fact that *Enemigo* and *Fuera* were celebrated as 'Brechtian' in a way that the Ukamau Group's other films, and those of Rodríguez and Silva, were not, is a symptom of the tendency of both European and some Latin American criticism to focus largely on textual operations, rather than the relationship of a film to its historical, social and political contexts, or the performative event of shooting, editing and screening a film. Exhibition in art-house and festival locations, or on television, lends itself to the notion of a film as a fixed and completed text, yet filmmakers such as the Ukamau Group and Fundación Cine Documental have consistently sought to modify their textual practices according to circumstance. When Sanjinés realised that indigenous peasants had difficulty understanding *Yawar Mallku* because of their unfamiliarity with its 'Western' film language, he planned to have a storyteller who would outline the plot before the film projection started in subsequent screenings in communities.[30] In this sense Huillca's presence within the celluloid reality of *Enemigo* can be seen as simply a

[30] 'Jorge Sanjinés: Ukamau and Yawar Mallku' (1971: 46).

mechanical practical device to save time or labour in rural screenings. The Ukamau Group has never made a secret of the fact that the primary spectators of their films are the indigenous, peasant and worker audiences with whom the filmmakers have held (often outdoor) cine-forums since the 1960s – frequently, where circumstances demand, using portable 16mm film projectors and electricity generators.

Similarly, Rodríguez and Silva's films do not in themselves use distancing or alienation devices: whereas in Brecht's A-effect 'the actor speaks his part not as if he were improvising it himself but like a quotation' (Brecht 1964: 138), *Chircales* sought as natural as possible a performance from its subjects, so that the reconstructed sequences would fuse seamlessly into the documentary reality of the rest of the film. Just as Sanjinés developed the sequence shot so that the camera would not intervene in the protagonists' spontaneous action, in the production of *Chircales* Rodríguez and Silva spent many months building a rapport with their documentary subjects, a family of brickmakers living in abject poverty on the outskirts of Bogotá; the filmmakers gradually introduced a tape recorder and a still camera before beginning to shoot with a film camera, until 'we had become part of their lives, [so] it was possible for them to assume a very casual, unaffected stance in front of the camera, which neither determined nor modified their behaviour' (Silva and Rodríguez 1986: 27). This is not to say, though, that the theoretical questions over the materiality of the text or the relation between art and ideology with which European critics grappled so enthusiastically were not addressed. In *Chircales*, originally conceived as an anthropological project rather than a film for mass-distribution, the demystification of the text occurred during the very process of making the film: the people of the brickyard were shown silent rough cuts at regular intervals and participated in the composition and editing of scenes and shots, so that they would gradually become aware both of their own political

circumstance and of the ideological functioning of mainstream culture (Caicedo and Ospina 1974).

The Colombian filmmakers' conception of the 'dominant ideology' (see below) is closely aligned with Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus (ISA): the system of institutions (school, church, media) that serve to win the people's consent, by 'interpellating' them as subjects, for reproducing conditions of production that act against the latter's class interests (Althusser 1971). Films such as *Chircales*, like many 'political modernist' films in contemporary Western Europe, sought to reveal the ideological and alienating nature of those institutions.[31] But while post-1968 French journals like *Cahiers* and *Cinéthique* praised films whose *internal* textual operations exposed and overturned the insidious 'interpellation' by society of its subjects, Rodríguez and Silva used celluloid as one step in a wider processual and pedagogical project of ideological *concientización*:

> The people have, after many years of domination, internalised the ideology of the dominant classes. [...] Once [during the filming of *Campesinos*] we were trying to do a reconstruction, for instance, and the dialogues that they came up with and the whole way they went about doing the reconstruction had a lot to do with TV soaps. We realised that there was television there and people watched soaps, and the dialogues they proposed were typical of TV and radio soaps.[32]

In one scene, *Chircales* cleverly uses an ironic synchronous counterpoint between sound and image: even as we see the workers slaving over their thankless labour the camera pans over the radio that is providing the soundtrack: the popular soap opera *María*, apparently an adaptation of Jorge Isaacs' foundational Colombian novel *María* (1867). The contrast deftly reminds us of the gulf between the pastoral romance they are listening to that is so central to Colombia's national mythology, and the reality of *Chircales*' main protagonist – also, by coincidence, named María (Castañeda). But as

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[31] For Althusser, 'one of the effects of ideology is the practical *denegation* of the ideological character of ideology by ideology: ideology never says, "I am ideological". It is necessary to be outside ideology, i.e. in scientific knowledge, to be able to say: I am in ideology' (1971: 163-164).
[32] Jorge Silva, cited in 'Colombia: la memoria popular' (1977: 22).

Silva and Rodríguez have noted, the first screening of their film to the *chircaleros* resulted in little more than the excitement of recognition; it was only after repeated screenings and discussions that the ideological implications arising from the film's textual operations (themselves arising directly out of the workers' reality, as Rodríguez and Silva saw it) became apparent (Caicedo and Ospina, 1974: 37).

The screenings organised by Fundación Cine Documental often serve in this way as pedagogical sessions in which their (and others') films have often served as raw materials to bring forth discussion on how indigenous groups might use the equipment and aesthetics of cinema. In her recent text *A nuevas tecnologías, nuevas identidades* (2002), Rodríguez has shown a preference to periodise her own work within the relatively new tradition of indigenous media, and the New Latin American Cinema is seen as merely a transitional, sometimes paternalistic stage on the road to indigenous audiovisual self-determination. *Planas* (1970-71), the first film she made with indigenous people, is thus given as the starting point of this process, while the importance of *Nuestra voz de tierra y futuro* (1975-81) derives from the interest that the filmmaking process aroused in the indigenous assessors who worked for several years on that film with Rodríguez and Silva. One of the upshots of the making of this film was a video-making workshop for indigenous people directed by Rodríguez and the Bolivian Iván Sanjinés in Popayán, Colombia in 1992, in which the films of the Fundación were screened and discussed with the participants. *Nuestra voz* and *La voz de los sobrevivientes/The Voice of the Survivors* (1980) are among the films that have been distributed tirelessly by the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC), the indigenous governing body with whose collaboration the films were produced, as part of their important but sporadic video-making training programme.[33] These films form crucial parts of indigenous 'screen memories' that bolster autochthonous groups'

[33] For accounts of the use made of the Fundación's films by indigenous communities, see Rodríguez (2002); Ruffinelli (2003a); and Gómez (1996).

political projects by reinforcing awareness of their own cultural and historical unity (Ginsburg 2003). They undermine homogenising or co-optive national narratives even as they strengthen indigenous communities' sense of having their own history quite apart from official history.

So if the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental's films are not always intrinsically dialogical, if their aesthetic strategies and narrative structures sometimes betray an apparently naïve faith in the reality of the filmed image, it is also true, in Michael Chanan's words, that their attitude to realism 'is not simply a question of the accuracy or fullness of fit of the image to what it pictures, [... r]ather, truth lies in the relationship with the audience, in the film's mode of address, because the meaning of what is shown depends on the viewer's position' (1997, p.215).[34] Julianne Burton likens the New Latin American Cinema's processual conception of filmmaking to a Marxist de-alienation of social relations: 'where the dominant cinema prioritized exchange value, oppositional filmmakers emphasized use values' (1997, p.180). She admits, though, that this socialist cultural practice is possible only at the films' primary production and viewing stages:

> the act of abstracting them from their original context necessarily subjects them to a certain inevitable reification. They cease to be a process in order to (appear to) become simply a *product*. Their nature as the intersection of dynamic historical and social forces and personalities cedes to the appearance of a static, particularized, "crystalized" object of contemplation, a reproducible and hence immutable commodity. (Burton 1997: 167)

Hence most audiences at film festivals or art-house screenings (save, perhaps, some of those who have read interviews and articles on the films prior to the screenings) view these films as authored masterpieces, or polished examples of best practice in revolutionary filmmaking. One of the tasks of this thesis is to analyse the films not just

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[34] Echoing Chanan, Mike Wayne takes issue with Steve Neale's critique of *La hora de los hornos*, which accuses Solanas and Getino's film of failing to question its own status and textual practices. For Wayne, this position is unable to look beyond the modernist view of a film as a self-contained aesthetic product, and fails to take into account the activist role of the audience in creating and questioning meaning (Wayne 2001: 126).

in terms of their textual operations and social and political contexts, but also in terms of their processual significance.

I thus follow Coco Fusco's (1989) warning against fixing the films of the New Latin American Cinema in an idealised past in order merely to 'salvage them as the least corrupted vestiges of new left radicalism'; against 'get[ting] stuck trying to fix the meaning of a text and that text to a certain maker'. But Fusco calls for a wholesale breaking down of the notion of collective spectatorship, pointing out that Third Cinema's view that 'the spectator sees a film, has a discussion and leaves with his/her mind changed' is reductive and simplistic: she calls for a study of spectatorial ambivalences brought about microsocial categories (such as gender) that inform individuals' experiences of political cinema. On the level of textual analysis, the same rejection of homogenising Third Worldism lay behind Aijaz Ahmad's fierce response to Frederic Jameson's pronouncement that 'third world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic – necessarily project a political dimension in the form of a national allegory' (Jameson 1986: 69). Ahmad argued that to reduce a text to its ideological functions alone – and specifically *national* ideological functions at that, as though Third World people had no other categories through which to identify – was arrogant and condescending, since *all* literary texts exist within 'highly differentiated, usually very over-determined contexts of competing ideological and cultural clusters' (1987: 23). If one were to place a text within a 'totality' (such as national allegory) it would first be necessary to 'specify and historicize the determinations which constitute any given field'; instead what Jameson does, suggests Ahmad, is to place all Third World texts into a homogenised, transparent category 'so that all ideological complexity is reduced to a single ideological formation and all narratives are read as local expressions of a metatext' (1987: 23).

Nonetheless, as I intimated earlier in this chapter, what all of the films studied in this thesis firmly believe in – from 1960s experimental melodrama to twenty-first century grassroots video – is that if national imaginaries have traditionally proved reductive, repressive and exclusionary, collective identity should by no means be abandoned altogether. Ella Shohat's 'post-Third-Worldism' counters both Third-Worldism's tendency to subordinate 'private' categories such as gender, sexuality and ethnicity in favour of the public sphere of nationality, class and continental revolution, as well as Western feminism's trend towards subsuming Third World feminism into a Eurocentric discourse on 'universal' women's rights. Referring specifically to films from the 1980s and 1990s, Shohat maintains that feminism is entirely compatible with, rather than contradictory to, anti-colonialism, since these films 'do not so much reject the "nation" as interrogate its repressions and limits, passing national discourse through the grids of class, gender, sexuality, and diasporic identities' (2003, p.74). As well as reading Marta Rodríguez's *Amor, mujeres y flores/Love, Women and Flowers* (1989) or *La hoja sagrada/The Holy Leaf* (2002) as protests against the life-threatening and self-interested practices of multi-national corporations, governments and armed groups, they can be seen as vessels through which ordinary women can chart their experiences of everyday resistance in the face of extraordinary trauma – or indeed (in the latter case) as part of a repository of indigenous historical memory aimed at consolidating a communal sense of cultural and ethnic identity in support of a political project of self-defence. Through Rodríguez's videos the private and the public coalesce, proving that national, ethnic and gender identities are perpetually complicit in one another's construction.

Yet for all that they may be able to tell us about political processes and cultural identities, it would be a mistake to reduce these films to the status of sociological tracts. As I will argue in Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis, Rodríguez and Silva's film-processes combined the politicised anthropological practice of educating in the field with

sophisticated textual operations that saw indigenous philosophical notions seep into their films' linguistic structures, giving them an appeal beyond the indigenous, peasant and worker communities in and for which they were primarily made. As such, while I concur with Teshome Gabriel's proposal, cited earlier in this chapter, that 'Third Cinema' tends to emphasise the relationship between text and audience more than its own internal structure, I also maintain that close textual analysis can be a fruitful way of understanding the ways in which the films of the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental have tried to insert themselves into collective imaginaries. I follow Beatriz Sarlo's concern that in analysing 'high-impact' works of aesthetic value (which I believe these films to be), to rely solely on what she terms a 'Cultural Studies' approach – analysing texts in terms of their social significance – risks overlooking a crucial '"something" left over': 'not an inexpressible essence, but rather a site of resistance, the force of a meaning which stays in the text and yet varies with the passing of time' (Sarlo, 2003: p.29). To ignore Sarlo's point risks another type of theoretical Eurocentrism, which supposes that 'we Latin Americans should produce works which are suitable for cultural analysis whereas Others (basically Europeans) have the right to create works which are suitable for art criticism' (Sarlo 2003: 33). This is not to reverse Third Cinema's conversion of aesthetics into an anti-colonial device, but to recognise that anti-colonialism is not the only lens through which those aesthetics can be understood.

Coproducing identities, contesting national space

If the anti-colonial identities invoked by the Ukamau Group's and the Fundación Cine Documental's films have often proclaimed the authenticity of their representations of national reality, and their opposition to neo-colonised national states, governments and bureaucracies, that does not mean that they have been produced, publicised,

distributed or exhibited exclusively outside of mainstream and metropolitan spheres. The Ukamau Group's dealings with Italian Radio and Television (RAI), which coproduced *El coraje del pueblo*, illustrates the perpetual tension between, on the one hand, Latin American cineastes' talent for reconverting available morsels of the mainstream European cultural sphere into revolutionary cinematic material, and on the other, European appropriation of Latin American political cinema for its own ideological interests. RAI's 'Latin America as Seen by its Filmmakers' series, of which *Coraje* was the only film to be completed, was directed by Latin American producer-distributors Walter Achugar and Edgardo Pallero, who were wholly committed to the cause of militant cinema; but once *Coraje*'s strongly anti-US politics became clear to the state television channel's high-level directorship, jitters over potential diplomatic fallout led to an attempt to pull the entire production. When this proved impossible, the Italian television version – seen by far more people than Sanjinés' own release that won Best Film at the 1971 Pesaro festival – was heavily censored. One commentator's account of the film's screening on Bavarian television reports that to compensate for some of the twenty-five minutes cut from Sanjinés' edition, an extra fifteen-minute sequence was added early on in the film, in which a panel of Bolivian 'experts' tell the uninformed German viewer, entirely contrary to the filmmakers' intentions, that *Coraje* demonstrates how 'it is extraordinarily easy to excite the Bolivian miners to subversion', given as they are to 'violent slogans and pernicious simplifications'.[35] US critic Michael Shedlin voiced his concern that government sponsorship might render 'revolutionary art' impotent, suggesting that by financing *Courage*, the Italian government 'obviously feels that it can absorb [it] and strengthen itself in the process' (1974, p.38). Even so, the Bolivian filmmakers negotiated property rights on the negatives and distribution rights in Latin America, meaning that however liberal and

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[35] For the Bavarian television version of *Coraje*, see Schumann (1973); quotations from pp.52-54. For accounts of the Ukamau Group's relationship with RAI, see Achugar (1986: 230-231); Huleu *et al* (1974); and Sanjinés (1979: 107-109).

reformist the Italian and German television versions became, the primary goal – to make a film that could be screened as the basis for political discussion with Bolivian miners. peasants and students in Latin America – could be maintained.

Shedlin's worries were echoed over a decade later at the conference on Third Cinema at the 1986 Edinburgh Film Festival. Michael Chanan writes that some delegates (none of whom were from Latin America, as Julianne Burton pointed out) felt uneasy about collaborating with Channel Four, the new British channel with a minority interest remit which coproduced Sanjinés' *La nación clandestina* (1989) and Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva's *Amor, mujeres y flores* (1989):

> Official recognition threatened to institutionalize an oppositional film movement which was one of the strongest in Europe. It forced the new programme makers into corners, raising expectations at the same time as imposing new conditions of competition over funds and air space. Moreover, the initial efforts of the new programme makers often betrayed the difficulties of adapting to what was, even if the ratings were relatively negligible, a mass audience, whose anonymity demanded different strategies from those appropriate to the direct encounter with an audience at a small, politically motivated meeting (Chanan, 1997: 385).

The implication is that making 'Third Cinema' for a mass medium (even a minority one such as the early Channel Four) renders problematic its established concern for questioning Western aesthetics and critical theory. From a theoretical perspective the fears over institutionalisation echoed *Cinéthique*'s 1970s idealism, which felt that 'a film that compromises itself aesthetically in order to reach a wider audience by conforming to the expectations of those who control the marketplace, can never achieve a rupture with ideology' (Rodowick 1988: 84). Yet running through Chanan's article is the much more applied concern that since the type of mass political mobilisation that had spurred Solanas and Getino's Third Cinema has largely been defeated, the filmmaking Left (at least in Britain) has experienced a crisis in defining its spectatorship: once clearly delimited political communities have become fragmented and blurred. For Chanan, in the shifting terrain caused by developments in video

technology and in television, satellite and cable transmission (we might now add the internet), 'the survival of Third Cinema depends on its origins within the margins and the interstices', which 'the global conditions of postmodern culture make it possible [...] to become aware of each other' (1997: 388). If 'three-worlds' theory no longer enjoys widespread credibility, oppositional filmmakers in Latin America may do better to continue exploring links with 'margins and interstices' across the globe than to insist on narrowly nationalist agendas.

In different ways, Channel Four's Bolivian and Colombian coproductions show that for a Latin American filmmaker, to work with a relatively enlightened mainstream European company does not have to entail the communicational problems that might beset local productions working in similar conditions; since their geographical displacement means that however anonymous and passive the European audience may be, they can still maintain their sense of a coherent political community back home. Thus, however bewildering *La nación* may have proved for its British television audience, with its ponderous sequence shots and reflections on Bolivian history and society, the financial intervention of Channel Four and Spanish Television (TVE) enabled Sanjinés to create an aesthetically accomplished work that seeks to speak directly to Bolivia's Aymara and Quechua communities.[36] Moreover, its budget, relatively small by European standards but considerable once converted into Bolivian pesos, meant that a film produced on the margins of the metropolis was able to acquire the status almost of a superproduction in Bolivia, bringing a highly politicised vision of Aymara identity to the centre of national cultural discourse, arguably without having to make many of the commercial concessions that such status would usually entail. Both

[36] According to Alan Fountain, who worked on the production of *La nación* for Channel Four, the station with its minority cultural remit had become a space through which producers supportive of politically radical art were able to direct funds towards 'supporting significant auteurs' on the assumption of making a financial loss. Fountain also notes that *La nación* was screened in a regular 'world cinema' slot, so many of those who tuned in were likely to have a greater than average understanding of Bolivia and of Third World cinema (telephone conversation with Alan Fountain, 12 April 2005).

Nación and the even costlier (US$800,000) *Para recibir el canto de los pájaros/To Hear the Birds Singing* certainly received plenty of coverage in Bolivia and brought socially unsettling matters to the foreground of the mainstream press, even if much coverage accused him of projecting an external, paternalistic vision of his Indian protagonists, and of cynically producing an internationally marketable product (ironically, more in relation to the independently produced *Canto* than the coproduction *Nación*). Despite Sanjinés' reservations about the 'intellectual supermarket' of European festivals, the group had always been keen on using its international networks to achieve as wide a global distribution as possible.[37] By the 1980s, Sanjinés unreservedly accepted the benefits of distributing his work abroad, and had begun to present himself on the international stage as a national spokesman who would reverse Bolivia's negative national image abroad. Ideological aims, of course, were inevitably never far away from the constant financial exigency to recoup costs.[38]

In the case of *Amor, mujeres y flores*, Channel Four's financial input enabled Marta Rodríguez to make a film whose lengthy interviews with exploited workers and their bosses in flower plantations outside Bogotá had sufficient political relevance to be of use to a specific community of workers in Colombia, but which at the same time was shot and edited in a relatively conventional and accessible style that could appeal to a relatively wide television audience in the UK.[39] At the same time, Rodríguez recounts that the Colombian Embassy in London was sufficiently concerned to voice a strong

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[37] According to a letter written by one member of the Ukamau Group, *Coraje* and *Yawar* achieved some 60 million television viewers worldwide. Aside from television channels in both Germanys and Mozambique, this document claims that the collective's films were distributed through commercial channels in countries as diverse as Algeria, Cape Verde, Angola, Portugal and Argentina, as well as university, cultural centre and underground circuits in the US, Mexico, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela (Untitled and undated document in the archives of the Cinemateca Boliviana, ref. REB 49).

[38] For negative Bolivian reviews of *Nación* and *Canto* along the lines mentioned, see Nogales Guzmán (1990), Echalar (1995) and Portugal (1995). For an excellent analysis of the critical reception of *Canto* in Bolivia, see Gumucio (1995). For Sanjinés' comments on the ideological and financial benefits of European distribution, see Benedetti (1989), as well as Fred Coker and Monica Justo's interview with Sanjinés at the National Film Theatre, London (Coker and Justo 1986).

[39] *Amor* was seen by 881,000 viewers on 12 September 1989, an audience over 30 percent larger than that of the channel's main evening news programme that day. Sanjinés' *Nación* was seen by 96,000 people on 13 October 1992, and *Yawar Mallku*, screened on 19 October 1983, obtained 900,000 viewers. Source: *BARB (Broadcaster's Audience Research Board) Network Report).*

opposition to the film and accused it of damaging Colombia's international cut flower exports. After its screening on Channel Four, some of the women who appeared in *Amor* were interrogated, although the agro-industrialists who owned the plantations did subsequently conduct research into the environmental impact of their businesses (West and West 1993). The direct political results of her films are evidently more important to Rodríguez than artistic autonomy. In relation to *Amor*, which she was obliged to cut from 90 to 50 minutes for the needs of commercial television, she remarked that 'when European TV producers meddle in the work of the documentary filmmaker – they want to impose cultural and narrative models that are not ours' (West and West 1993: 44).[40] Nevertheless, both Rodríguez's and Jorge Sanjinés' willingness to engage with international media networks shows a realisation that absolute autonomy is not necessarily the best strategy, since problems of political process and cultural identity that are global in scope require a cinematic reflection that is global in reach. In García Canclini's words,

> national and local identities can persist if we resituate them in a communication that is multitextual. Identity, made more dynamic through this process, will not only be a ritualized narration, the monotonous repetition of outmoded principles. Identity, as a narrative we constantly reconstruct with others, is also a coproduction. (1997: 257)

As Rodríguez's run-in with the Colombian Embassy in 1989 suggests, even when militant filmmakers have acted as internationally-prominent standard-bearers of barely existing national cinema traditions, national authorities have acted as barriers to rather than facilitators of their international success. In the hands of such well-known Latin American directors as the Argentine Fernando Solanas and the Cuban Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, argues Marvin D'Lugo, in the 1960s and 1970s the notion of film authorship was 'mitigated by the practices and goals of production collectives rather than merely of the individual filmmaker's desire for self-expression'. In the 1980s these

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[40] Even so, Rodríguez has continued to work for television channels in order to finance her activities. *La hoja sagrada* (2001), for instance, was a rare opportunity to work for Colombian national television – in this case the *Diálogos de nación* series.

'oppositional, anti-status quo, resistance figures' (and here we might include Sanjinés and, to a lesser extent, Marta Rodríguez) became 'refigured as national auteurs, principally through international film festivals which privileged the authorial as an expression of the national' (2003: 110). With the increasing importance of coproduction and foreign distribution in the 1990s, some of these figures became partly 'deterritorialised', while reinserting their local concerns into internationally consumable themes and forms, approaching the status of 'mediator[s] between economic markets which are also cultural markets, between the narratives of the past understood around the fictions of the nation, and the emerging new narrative of a more utopian global community' (D'Lugo 2003: 121).

That paradigm (especially its latter part) is wholly applicable to neither Jorge Sanjinés nor Marta Rodríguez, but by the early years of the twenty-first century they had both undoubtedly been enshrined as high-quality representatives of their respective national cultural spheres on the global stage, gaining critical acclaim, prizes at international events and, in the case of Sanjinés' *Yawar Mallku* (1969), a place in the grandiose pantheon (as some Bolivian commentators characterised it) of UNESCO's '59 most important films in the history of cinema'. [41] As I have already suggested, these filmmakers' configuration as national auteurs appears to be not the result of concerted campaigns on the part of the directors themselves, but rather an inevitable effect of the manners in which projects are pitched to coproducers; and film festivals, art-house screenings and television broadcasts are programmed, marketed and judged. Indeed, in some cases it appears to work against filmmakers' own aims. Sanjinés was reportedly dissatisfied that the Cinemateca's director Pedro Susz proposed *Yawar* rather than *La*

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[41] For Bolivian reactions to *Yawar Mallku*'s inclusion in the 1995 UNESCO list, see, for instance, '*Yawar Mallku*, entre los filmes más importantes de la historia del cine', unreferenced press article (10/12/95), reproduced in Gamboa (1999: 174-176); and reports in *La Razón* (8/11/02), *La Época* 154 (5/9/04), and *La Patria* (14/7/05). In reality UNESCO's directory was intended merely to aid teachers promote tolerance the values of tolerance, 'friendship and harmony between peoples, equality between all categories of society, the right to be different, and a respect for different races, colours, religions, physical characteristics, traditions, and ways of life' (see UNESCO 1997).

nación clandestina (1989) for inclusion in the UNESCO list. The later film, it would seem, was both too culturally specific and too politically uncomfortable to be put forward for the pantheon of 'universal' cinema: the distant, grainy black-and-white images of *Yawar* could be more easily assimilated into a transnational liberal humanist discourse.[42]

National-auteur status, though, has not come without considerable confrontation with filmmakers' respective countries' authorities, even where their international presence has ostensibly served to demonstrate the high quality of national cinematography to domestic and foreign audiences. The Bolivian military regime received Sanjinés' hugely successful first feature *Ukamau*, produced by the government-run Instituto Cinematográfico Boliviano (Bolivian Film Institute, ICB), with muted anger, and eventually sacked Sanjinés from the directorship of the Institute as a result. Several years after *El coraje del pueblo* had picked up prizes at the Pesaro and Berlin festivals, and French critic Guy Hennebelle's had judged it to be 'one of the twenty most beautiful films in the history of cinema' (Hennebelle, 1974), the La Paz town hall brought an end to its three-week run at the Cinemateca in June 1979 under strong pressure from the Commander-in-Chief of the Bolivian army General Ramón Azero Sanzetenea, who accused it of high treason for 'encumbering the process of liberation and encouraging attitudes that lend themselves to a climate that might induce a state of mind that could bring about armed conflict'. A letter written by the ad-hoc 'Committee for the Exhibition of the Film *El coraje del pueblo*', campaigning to reinstate the film's screening run, pointed out that it had 'obtain[ed] prizes on behalf of

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[42] The prizes won by Sanjinés' and Rodríguez's films are too numerous to list here in full, but among Sanjinés' prizes are Young Directors Prize, Cannes Film Festival, 1967 (*Ukamau*); Gran Premio at Benalmádena Festival of Auteur Cinema, Spain, 1974 (*El enemigo principal*); Special Prize at Tashkent Film Festival, USSR, 1980 (*Fuera de aquí*); and Concha de Oro at San Sebastián Film Festival, Spain, 1989 (*La nación clandestina*). For more details see Gamboa (1999: 312-333) and Mesa (1985: 285-290). Marta Rodríguez and her collaborators have won, among others, the Golden Dove at Leipzig Film Festival, East Germany (*Chircales* and *Planas*); Grand Prix, Tampere Film Festival, Finland, 1973 (*Chircales*); Best Latin American Film at the 1st Festival of Indigenous Peoples, Mexico, 1985 (*Nuestra voz*); and Best Documentary, aluCine International Media Festival, Toronto, Canada, 2005 (*Una casa sola se vence*). For more details see Arboleda Ríos and Osorio (2003: 159-184).

our country, and prestige in the field of the universal art of cinematography', as well as appealing to its 'ethical, human and Christian values' and invoking the Universal and American Declarations of Human Rights to justify the claim. This episode, which occurred during a period of transitional military rule before the brief democratic interlude of 1979, further demonstrates the accommodation found between militant cinema and mainstream language and values in negotiating with hardline regimes (see introduction to the present chapter). Despite the political wrangling *Coraje*, which named (then Colonel) Azero as one of those responsible for the 1967 massacre in Siglo Veinte, was warmly welcomed into Bolivia's cinematographic canon and went on to win the prestigious national Kantuta de Plata prize at the end of June, with the military junta still in power.[43]

Yet in the early 1980s, with democratic rule timidly appearing on Bolivia's horizons, uncompromising militancy seemed no longer to be necessary, and Sanjinés began to assume the persona of a national cultural figurehead, often harshly critical of government policy yet, by the twenty-first century, largely acceptable to mainstream society. With the bitter memory of a series of brutal military dictatorships still fresh in the national consciousness (most notably that of Luis García Meza, although the *banzerato* was not far in the past), Bolivian critics Carlos Mesa (1985) and Alfonso Gumucio (1983) set about writing their countries' 'invisible' cinematic histories, apparently motivated by a certain nationalistic pride, a belief in the need for the emerging democratic nation to recognise a common audiovisual memory, and a scientific fervour to chart, in Gumucio's case, 'all the cinematic experiences that have been carried out in Bolivia, either by Bolivians or by foreigners, as well as all the productions made by Bolivians outside Bolivia' (1983: 12). The Ukamau Group's films

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[43] For the events surrounding the 1979 retrospective, see Gumucio (1979: 61-63). For the documents relating to *Coraje*'s ban and the Kantuta de Plata award in 1979, see Gamboa (1999): 143-147 and 193-197; and 'Carta al Ministerio del Interior en torno al film *El coraje del pueblo*', unreferenced press article in the archives of Bevrijdingsfilms (written 18/6/79).

are given pride of place in both collections, and while both authors have some sympathy with the goals of the New Latin American Cinema (Gumucio apparently more so than Mesa), both monographs place Sanjinés within a filmmaking tradition that began not with a Third Cinema-esque realisation of continental and global inequality, but with the 1952 National Revolution.

Mesa, who of the two critics insists more heavily on the post-1952 vintage, goes beyond those 'New Latin American Cinema' writers who point to the movement's cinematic and social predecessors of the 1950s or earlier, and writes that the cultural upheaval of which Sanjinés' films are a symptom – 'the upsurge of a new rhythm in the conception and development of culture' (1985: 9) – is concomitant with and arising directly from the political and economic changes that came with the Revolution. But while Mesa is keen to draw out continuities in consolidating a national lineage (his smooth reading-back in time dedicates an entire chapter to the linkages from national documentary pioneer Jorge Ruiz to Jorge Sanjinés, and includes in his readings of the exile pictures *Enemigo* and *Fuera* only the briefest of mentions that they were made outside Bolivian soil), Gumucio's story, rather more disjointed, is one of relatively isolated pioneers heroically overcoming the odds stacked against the struggling Bolivian filmmaker, from José María Velasco Maidana in the 1920s through to Ruiz in the 1950s and Sanjinés in the 1960s and beyond (Gumucio 1983; Gumucio 1986: 266). In both cases, the Ukamau Group serves as an exemplary experiment in Bolivia's national filmmaking history.

Film critics in the present-day mainstream press still have no problems with referring to Sanjinés as 'the national director' or 'the national auteur', and his movies are taken, now as in the 1960s, as an opportunity to discuss issues of national identity, political developments and social affairs. Yet rather than seeing his acceptance into the national canon as a mainstream appropriation of his radical oppositional cinema,

Sanjinés appears to have embraced the liberal-democratic press's hungry attention to 'difference' and the oxygen of publicity it offers and harnessed it in order to pursue the radical political goals he still embraces. In the face of criticism from many quarters for holding onto an outdated model of political filmmaking; for retaining a paternalistic and exoticist view of indigenous society; or for selling out to international auteurist commercialism, Sanjinés has resolutely refused to allow the Ukamau Group to fall into a politically sterile arthouse idiom. Even as he was being enshrined in Gumucio's and Mesa's studies as the doyen of Bolivian national cinema, he was in the process of making *Las banderas del amanecer/The Flags of Dawn* (with Beatriz Palacios, 1983), a documentary made from footage of the popular protests during the early 1980s dictatorships and transitional to democratic rule, and which denounces military and democratic governments alike for selling the country out to foreign interests through the International Monetary Fund. *Los hijos del último jardín* (2003), while altogether more elaborate and 'authored' than Marta Rodríguez's grassroots videos, locates its narrative against the backdrop of the social upheavals of February 2003 (and integrates documentary footage of the events into the diegesis), placing Sanjinés back on a level of activist filmmaking far closer to 'Third Cinema' than the current activities of many of his 1970s contemporaries.

Sanjinés' provocative style has arguably enabled him to transfer the cine-forums of political meetings to the pages of Bolivia's daily newspapers, where in the absence of a single film magazine most of Bolivia's cinema criticism now takes place. But while the national press's extensive coverage of *Hijos* and *Canto* (much of it negative) has propaganda value in itself, the hierarchical divide the medium necessarily places between writer and reader seems less useful, in Sanjinés' still-valid 'cinema with the people', than do the grassroots exhibition events that the Ukamau Group still conducts, when personnel and resources allow, in schools, trade unions and other 'popular'

locations. Future developments may lie in activist websites such as the Bolivian page of the worldwide anti-globalisation site Indymedia, or the Andean indigenous affairs gateway, Quechua Network, both of which have recently carried bulletins announcing releases and screenings of Sanjinés' films. It remains to be seen whether the potential for such sites to hold online discussion forums based on the films might radically transform the way in which the Ukamau Group's politicised film-acts are conducted.[44]

Marta Rodríguez and her collaborators in the Fundación Cine Documental have neither enjoyed nor sought the same level of international or national attention as Sanjinés, although within national film circles they have long been recognised as having produced some of Colombia's best cinema. *Chircales* (1967-72), an analysis of the social and political conditions of a group of impoverished brick-makers in the outskirts of Bogotá, was at least as aesthetically and technically accomplished as Sanjinés' debut feature *Ukamau*, but its participatory-observational documentary format proved far less marketable than its Bolivian counterpart, whose exotic and melodramatic allure gave it a wide popular appeal (see ch. 2). Furthermore while Sanjinés was able to establish his reputation as a director of national importance by using the promotional mechanisms availed to him by his position as the director of the ICB, Silva and Rodríguez relied from the start on screenings with their films' participants during the filming and editing process, and grass-roots events in indigenous communities, schools and cine-clubs. Consequently they never came close to the level of national acclaim boasted by many of their contemporaries of the 'New Latin American Cinema'.

Thus partly because of Fundación Cine Documental's reluctance to sustain energetic polemics and publicity campaigns through mainstream channels, and partly

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[44] Among the most in-depth reviews of *Hijos* carried in the national press are Susz (2004) and Díaz (2004); although national and regional dailies including *La Razón*, *El Deber*, *El Diario*, *La Prensa* and *Correo del Sur* covered the film. For recent web coverage of Sanjinés' films, see Indymedia Bolivia (http://bolivia.indymedia.org/es/2005/01/13926.shtml and http://bolivia.indymedia.org/es/2005/06/20287.shtml); and Quechua Network (http://www.quechuanetwork.org/news_template.cfm?news_id=1299&lang=f) (all accessed 19 July 2005).

due to the unquestionably non-commercial and oppositional nature of their work, the nature of state repression they came up against has been more localised and less headline-grabbing than that of the early days of the Ukamau Group. Even so the circumstances around the production and exhibition of their films suggests a similar combination of repression from and accommodation with officialdom in the furtherance of their goals. During the process of making *Chircales* Rodríguez and Silva received threats of prosecution from the landowners that the film portrayed as inhuman and exploitative; and more recently when filming in war zones she and members of her production team have been in direct danger of kidnapping or worse, in the hands of landowner-backed paramilitaries or leftwing guerrilla groups concerned about the propagandistic consequences of the filmmakers' images reaching a national (or perhaps more seriously an international) audience.[45] A rare occasion on which the Fundación attracted large-scale political attention in national and international circles was with the hastily-produced *Planas* (1970-71), a denunciation of violent repression against a group of Guahibo Indians in the Eastern Plains. Their collaborator Gustavo Pérez Ramírez, a liberation theologian who inspired Silva and Rodríguez to become involved, took the film to the United Nations as part of a wider campaign to bring the events of Planas into the public eye. The film's relatively high profile nationally seems to have had more to do with the momentum of the Planas campaign, which by now had several years behind it, than with the filmmakers' own promotional strategies. Even that film, which makes an uncompromising call for Indians to lead the proletarian revolution, was produced with the equipment and laboratory facilities of the (privately-run) Colombian Social Development Institute (ICODES) of which Pérez Ramírez (who also provided over half the money for the film) was director.[46] In 1972 *Planas* won the prize for Best

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[45] Conversation with Marta Rodríguez, Bogotá, 8 July 2004; see also Rodríguez (1978: 38).

[46] For details of the Planas case, see Pérez Ramírez ed. (1971) and Pérez Ramírez (1971). The latter volume includes a large number of press cuttings and official communications surrounding the case (17-153).

Colombian Documentary at the Cartagena Film Festival, an event roundly criticised by both militant and independent Colombian filmmakers and its sympathisers for its lack of attempt to foment either Colombian or Latin American cinema; and the prize money enabled Rodríguez and Silva to continue work on their long-term project *Chircales*.[47]

Rodríguez's productions have indeed won widespread acclaim from national and foreign film festival judges, critics and filmmakers, who have placed them among Colombia's vintage cinematic output. In the 1970s Rodríguez and Silva's political militancy led them to reject outright the potential for truly radical filmmaking within the Communications Ministry's *sobreprecio* (surcharge) system which, since 1971, had attempted to create the basis for a fledgling national film industry. The s*obreprecio* law legislated that every foreign feature film exhibited on commercial theatrical release must be preceded by a nationally produced short, and each ticket sold was subject to a surcharge payable to a fund that would, in turn, finance the production of further shorts (Álvarez, 1982: pp.5-6). Rodríguez and Silva felt that *sobreprecio* could lead only to the neutralisation of political cinema and self-censorship, and the inevitable incorporation of militant cineastes into the state ideological mechanism:

> [Marta Rodríguez:] *Sobreprecio* has become a kind of official filter. And then when you're working with an investment of several million [pesos] you're forced to lower your sights, since if your film gets banned or vetoed you could go bankrupt. You can't do anything through that system. The cinema that we make doesn't allow to take positions that are mediated through anything [...] [Jorge Silva:] The [*sobreprecio*] films that have been made are incredibly poor. They're clumsy, superficial and irresponsible in the way they use film language. People are making films as if they were making shoes. Cinema is a commodity, yes, but it's a commodity that transmits ideology, right? The results of *sobreprecio*, in cultural terms, are absolutely dire. (In León Frías: 29)

In the fiercely divided scenario of 1970s Colombian oppositional cinema, *Chircales* and *Planas* were understandably praised within Rodríguez and Silva's

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[47] Rodríguez herself criticised the Cartagena festival for its 'pomp and provincialism', encouraging a 'cinema that spurns our country and that has a big inferiority complex on every level, and makes servile, mediocre copies from the worst foreign moulds and genres' (Caicedo and Ospina 1974: 43).

militant filmmaking circles, which saw them as more authentic and autochthonous than the social cinema that made compromises with mainstream ideology (Mayolo and Arbeláez 1974; C. Álvarez 1989: 91-104). Yet admiration crossed that divide: the filmmaker Lisandro Duque, one of *sobreprecio*'s most vocal defenders, was also compelled to praise *Chircales* as an unsurpassed landmark in Colombia's film history for its ideological clarity and methodological consistency, albeit with some criticism of Silva and Rodríguez's failure to sufficiently address militant cinema's inherent problem of distribution (Duque Naranjo, 1975). The renowned national critic Hernando Martínez Pardo, undoubtedly committed to an oppositional politics of some form but whose 1978 study of Colombian film is more interested in delineating a national tradition of cinematic quality than in promoting global revolution, also names *Chircales* as a new stage in the development of the Colombian cinema, for beyond the social cinema of the 1960s, and unlike the agit-prop films of Carlos Álvarez, it induces a new type of relationship with the viewer. Martínez Pardo wrote with a Bazinian penchant for films whose 'meaning arises [...] from the objects, spaces and people of a structured reality, but without the structuring hand making itself seen', so that 'meaning is tied to reality' (1978, p.307); for him, *Chircales*' layered and complex construction of meaning marked a new type of profound cinematic analysis of reality through critical research. Writing many years later Juan Diego Caicedo, strongly critical of the dogmatic dangers of militant cinema, periodised Colombia's documentary history into the three stages of 'ingenuity', 'militancy' and 'veracity and inventiveness'; Silva and Rodríguez's work, along with that of Carlos Mayolo and Luis Ospina, represents the subcategory 'commitment' within 'militancy' (as opposed to 'pamphleteering'), and is distinguished for its depth of research and structural integrity (Caicedo González, 1998-1999).

Nevertheless, the unsettling visions that Rodríguez's films present of the country's 'national reality' appear to be far from the political and economic agendas of

Colombian television executives, who exercise something more than a guiding hand over the raw materials of the nation's audiovisual imaginary. In 1982, following the success of Silva and Rodríguez's latest film *Nuestra voz de tierra* in Europe, where it had gained festival prizes and several offers of television broadcast, *Cine* magazine (published by the state film funding body FOCINE) printed an article lamenting the lack of national cinema and television exhibition channels made available to the two filmmakers.[48] Rodríguez has repeatedly spoken of her relative non-recognition within Colombia as a form of unspoken censorship:

> I think Colombia is the country with the greatest level of censorship. Can you believe that *Chircales*, which gets used in US universities to teach anthropology, took thirty-three years before it was shown on [Colombian] television, and then only in a slot at 11pm…when Bogotá is asleep. (Ruffinelli 2003a)
>
> Here the press barely talks about me, they censor me a lot, because the films I've made are very hard-hitting. I win a prize, and it never gets reported in the press.[49]

Just as Jorge Silva noted in 1977 that *Campesinos* (based on oral testimonies of peasants who lived through Colombia's long civil war known as *La Violencia*) narrates an alternative national history, one without archives or audiovisual record (Valverde, 1978: 303-353); Marta Rodríguez's videos of recent years continue to document Colombia's often spoken of but rarely narrated violence, and help construct the untold memory of people's and communities' everyday acts of heroism and resistance. The 'Third Cinema' debates over the dangers of collaborating with mainstream media are still significant, yet discussions over modernist aesthetics appear remote. What matters is to obtain financing, to make necessary concessions without surrendering integrity, and to face up to the Herculean task of distributing oppositional cinema in a country racked by internal violence. If there is any time for theory – and for Rodríguez there

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[48] See Lozano (1982). Colombian critic Luis Alberto Álvarez (1996) estimated that almost a million people saw *Nuestra voz* when it was screened on German TV channel ZDF soon after its release in 1982.
[49] Conversation with Marta Rodríguez, Bogotá, 19 July 2004.

surely is, if her recent text (2002) is anything to go by – it most certainly must be determined, as it always was, by 'everyday exigencies' (Chanan, 1997a, p.387).

It is hoped that this outline, necessarily brief, schematic and non-chronological, has helped sketch out the broad political, ideological and cultural contexts which have surrounded, informed and influenced the conception, production, distribution, exhibition and reception of the films that will be discussed in the rest of this thesis. This chapter has shown is that the significance of these films can be circumscribed neither to their internal operations as works of art, nor to the sociological or anthropological information they may be able to offer. They have variously been experienced as unfinished stages of a wider process of education and consciousness-raising; vehicles through which national intelligentsias have channelled their own guilt, curiosities, prejudices or Utopian projections about the savage interior of their countries. They have been sources of national pride to film critics or official bodies that have celebrated their aesthetic accomplishment in conditions of scarcity. Conversely, they have served as conduits for internationalist solidarity for Third World struggles from European or North American audiences, or for exoticist fascination about the Imperial other.

Chapter 2 will address (among others) the two films that have been regarded as Jorge Sanjinés' and Marta Rodríguez/Jorge Silva's early 'masterpieces', *Ukamau* and *Chircales*, not merely as authored works of art or as ideological artefacts, but as cultural products that have intervened in certain moments in different national, ethnic, communal and continental histories by virtue of both their political awareness and their aesthetic lure. By setting them alongside the self-reflexive Colombian film *Agarrando pueblo* (dir. Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo, 1977), I will discuss how politicised cinema in the late 1960s and early 1970s embarked on what García Canclini terms 'the mise-en-scène of the popular' (1990: 191-236): the ways in which the 'popular'

(proletarian or indigenous) classes were imagined in the mind's eye of militant cinema in its process of trying to square up the seemingly inexorable march forward of modernisation and development with the *pueblo*, cast as traditional in its ideology and marginalised in its social circumstance.

As John King (1990: 65-78) remarks, the New Latin American Cinema represented 'the shadow side of the dream of progress' of the 1950s and 1960s: an alternative modernisation project that was based on the Cuban Revolution rather than on national-popular developmentalism, that (as its advocates saw it) empowered rather than repressed its primitive underbelly. This belief powered the Ukamau Group's and the Fundación Cine Documental's conviction as to the 'national authenticity' of their films, which they proclaimed both at home and abroad, and which played so well to European (political) modernist critics and filmmakers. But it also pointed towards an idealisation of the indigenous or proletarian subject that tended to fix him/her to a particular sociological idea. It is the films' recourse to poetic aesthetic strategies, I will argue, that prevents them from falling into such essentialisms.

Chapter Two

Primitive revolutionaries

There was, among the practitioners of the emancipatory New Latin American Cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s, a strong sense of the need to make visible and audible the silent, invisible masses that constituted the popular classes of their countries. There was a heartfelt belief that the cultural impact of their 'alienated' national bourgeoisies, in thrall to US neo-imperialism, was no less devastating than that of the ongoing European colonialism in Africa and Asia, which as Fanon had pointed out, had systematically distorted, disfigured and destroyed the collective memory of the oppressed (Fanon 2001: 169). Yet for those politically committed cineastes, the precise definitions of who those masses were, how they related to notions of national community, and how they should best be portrayed to the world, proved notoriously slippery.

At the heart of this debate, as Zuzana Pick has observed, lay an ambivalent set of attitudes towards modernity and tradition. Drawing on such writers as Marshall Berman, Carlos Monsiváis, Jean Franco and Angel Rama, Pick argues that the New Latin American cineastes, like the communist and Marxist political movements with which they often sympathised, overtly opposed modernisation as being the fruits of capitalist exploitation; yet at the same time they 'concealed the term *modernity* under the guises of Marxist theories of dependency and cultural resistance' (1997: 302, emphasis in original). By energising 'the subversive power of popular traditions and historical memory' (1997: 304), they could both reject the exploitative side of modernity and ensure a deep-rooted mobilisation of the popular classes, even as their own projects were presented as the vanguard of social change. They thus proposed a different type of

modernity, grounded in the interests not of the national bourgeoisies, but of the popular classes.

On the surface *Chircales* (dir. Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva, Colombia, 1965-72), *Revolución* (dir. Jorge Sanjinés, Bolivia, 1963) and *Ukamau* (dir. Jorge Sanjinés, Bolivia, 1966) might seem to share little more than a political premise: the Colombian film is a documentary resulting from many years of anthropological fieldwork and a studious adaptation of *cinéma vérité*, while the montage short *Revolución* and the fiction feature *Ukamau* draw more on Eisensteinian avant-garde aesthetics and melodramatic sensibilities. Yet this chapter will address how in their different ways, these three films, which announced the Fundación Cine Documental and the Ukamau Group's arrival on the world cinematographic stage, dug deep into the popular realm in order to advance and consolidate revolutionary visions of modernity. I will argue that while the harrowing vision of primitive man presented in *Chircales* signals a radical rupture with existing discourses of modernity, *Ukamau* both draws upon and subverts the trope of the 'noble savage', the primitive but honourable Indian, that is deeply engrained within national *indigenista* narratives in Bolivia (and across Latin America). To frame my discussion of these films within the context of the New Latin American Cinema within which they came to be distributed and discussed, I will first turn to Luis Ospina and Carlos Mayolo's satirical short film *Agarrando pueblo* (Colombia, 1977).

Agarrando Pueblo: Fathoming the madman

As scholars such as García Canclini (1982), Martín-Barbero (1994; 2000) and Stam (1998) have argued, and as I hope will become apparent over the length of this thesis, to erect a binary opposition between the popular and primitive at one end, and modernity and capitalism at the other, amounts to little more than a Eurocentric

rhetorical device that overlooks the degree to which popular, or 'primitive', culture is woven into the fabric of capitalist modernity. This, though, did not prevent many politicised filmmakers and their proponents in the 1960s and 1970s from carrying out debate on such dichotomous theoretical terrain: a phenomenon on which *Agarrando pueblo* launches a full frontal, but brilliantly lucid attack.[1]

Conceived of as 'film criticism in the form of a comedy' (Mayolo 1978: 24), *Agarrando Pueblo* is structured as a *mise-en-abîme* that mocks many politicised filmmakers' pious pretensions to ventriloquising for the popular classes, and exposes the financial and ideological interests that lie behind their 'documentary' representations of reality. Its protagonists are a pair of filmmakers (played by Mayolo and Ospina themselves) who cruise the streets of Cali filming snippets of madmen, beggars and street urchins, ticking off a list of sensational pieces of evidence of Colombian depravity, to make a pseudo-scientific, 'sociological' documentary for German television. Needless to say their 'subjects' are neither asked for consent nor given the opportunity to speak for themselves. When, in one of the final scenes, the 'sociologist' interviews an illiterate, feckless and diseased family about their plight, the interviewees, we know, are actors, the scene is scripted and their setting, supposedly the family's home, is a ruined shack that the crew has broken into to shoot the proceedings.

At this point, though, the imagined 'primitive', Third-World subject finally answers back. As the 'sociologist' earnestly theorises about the social decay underpinning the family's poverty, El Fakir (a street performer who had earlier been filmed as a 'madman', played by Luis Alfonso Londoño as himself) appears in the front of the frame, pulls out his tongue and peers into the camera lens, yelling 'Ah, so you're snatching the people ['agarrando pueblo']? You're coming to film us so you can make them laugh!' Despite the film crew's interventions and attempts to pay him off to leave

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[1] However Julianne Burton (1997: 174) sees the production process itself of New Latin American Cinema as an 'intermediate strategy' between 'the atavistic reassertion of artisanal modes' of production, and the aspiration towards a 'new', modern, 'socialist rather than capitalist mode of production'.

the set, El Fakir leaps about before the camera, baring his behind and wiping it with the banknotes offered to him by one of the crew, ripping up the filmed footage and chasing the filmmakers off the set with his machete.

But just as we are concluding that the subaltern has had the last word, El Fakir stops his rant in full flow, glances off-screen, and asks, 'was that OK?' We cut to El Fakir sitting comfortably with the filmmakers chatting about the shoot – his intervention, we realise, was as staged as was the interview with the family. We might have suspected as much all along: throughout the movie the 'documentary' footage filmed by the directors within the diegesis has been shot in grainy, low-resolution colour video reminiscent of low-budget television, while the 'omniscient' images of the film crew are in a more polished and defined 16mm black-and-white stock, an effect that had distanced us from both realms of action all along. In this final scene, we realise, the black-and-white shots of El Fakir violently chasing off the filmmakers have been highly accomplished: carefully-wrought, observant low-level panning shots that zoom meticulously into and out of the eyes of the children who peer in through a crack in the fence, which cuts to an establishing shot revealing their spatial relation to the main field of action; a striking extreme-high-angle shot taken from atop a wall as Londoño performs his madman's dance. The spatial dynamics defining this didactic sequence of shots are themselves constructed with great precision.

For Teshome Gabriel, *Agarrando Pueblo* 'criticizes the exploitative nature of some Third World filmmakers who peddle Third World poverty and misery at festival sites in Europe and North America and do not approach their craft as a tool of social transformation' (2000: 300). This is, in a sense, an accurate characterisation of the film: Ospina and Mayolo were vocally critical of movies such as *Gamín* (Waif, 1976) which, they claimed, made use of both state credits (in the form of *sobreprecio*) and the handouts of foreign producers looking for *pornomiseria*, or poverty exploitation

movies, trading on a 'primitive' caricature of Colombia to bolster the First World's self-satisfied feeling of modernity. For them, as well as for Marta Rodríguez, such cinema was 'dishonest', 'unscientific' and 'castrated', failing as it did to perform a 'true cultural inquiry' or to 'inscribe itself into the struggles of the Colombian people' (Mayolo and Rodríguez 1975).[2] *Agarrando Pueblo*, which was independently financed and produced, and distributed through alternative networks, also warns that when accommodation with dominant regimes of capital is given priority over a commitment to reality, a film's subjects are cast unspeakingly as one-dimensional emblems of an agenda imposed by filmmakers or producers. To follow Gabriel's theoretical inspiration, such a filmmaker might be acting out of a similar motivation to Fanon's 'native intellectual' who sees his national reality through foreign eyes: 'he wishes to attach himself to the people; but instead he only catches hold of their outer garments' (Fanon 2001: 180). The 'objectivity' with which *Agarrando Pueblo*'s filmmakers portray the *caleño* poor is 'in fact only the inert, already forsaken result of frequent, and not always very coherent adaptations of a much more fundamental substance'. Mayolo and Ospina's characters, like Fanon's native intellectual, 'instead of setting out to find this substance, will let [themselves] be hypnotised by these mummified fragments which because they are static are in fact symbols of negation and outworn contrivances' (Fanon 2001: 180).

The problem with Gabriel's reading of *Agarrando Pueblo* is that, by subsuming it into his own totalising theoretical framework, he performs the same ventriloquy act on 'Third World' film as Mayolo and Ospina's filmmakers do on their subjects. Gabriel (2000) subdivides the 'alternative aesthetics' of what he calls 'Third World Film' into three interlocking and progressively revolutionary categories based on Fanon's model of national liberation: 'the unqualified assimilation', 'the remembrance phase' and 'the

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[2] *Pornomiseria* is an amalgamation of *pornografía* and *miseria* (poverty). Its limits are, of course, set by the whim or political/aesthetic attitudes of the individual. One Colombian critic accused the work of Carlos Álvarez, and 'nearly' Silva and Rodríguez's films, of 'disguising lazy thinking in facile "Third-Worldist" sketches, in the Decalogue of a political clique, in the insipid euphoria of certain international awards' (Ruiz Gómez 1977: 27).

combative phase'. Within this schema *Agarrando pueblo* serves as a laudable critique of the 'remembrance phase' that reminds us that while such uncritical romanticisation of the past is perhaps necessary for a people to acquire cultural coherence, such regressive falsifications should be seen only as 'a process, a moving towards the next [combative] stage' (Gabriel 2000: 300). Never mind that the type of film made by the directors in *Agarrando Pueblo* scarcely exalts 'traditional virtues' as Gabriel's 'remembrance phase' films supposedly do; Gabriel's argument twists Mayolo and Ospina's film into being little more than a cog in the ever-advancing process of achieving a truly revolutionary and emancipatory cinema. But while the *caleño* filmmakers were clearly committed to the cause of alternative and revolutionary cinemas – both their own written criticism and the general tone of their short-lived film journal *Ojo al cine* prove as much – *Agarrando pueblo*'s self-obliterating narrative is far from being a step towards 'the final horizon of a cinema oriented toward a peaceful coexistence with folk-culture' (Gabriel 2000: 314). It suggests rather that the very notion of a 'folk-culture' is itself, in Colombia's case at least, a rhetorical device constructed in the mind's eye of those with financial or ideological interests in its existence.

Gabriel's neat sketching-out of Third (World) Cinema also overlooks the fact that the most impacting films cannot be reduced to the straitjacket of the militant 'final horizon'. *Agarrando pueblo* also points out that the emblematised 'subjects' of the diegetic filmmakers are much more than their crude documentary makes them seem. In the final scene of *Agarrando pueblo*, when Mayolo asks El Fakir, 'what do the people from round here say about the film?', he replies in a frank, everyday tone that contrasts with his crazed performance of the previous scene:

> Well, for instance in this street a lot of people ask me how I can get to this point I'm at now. So I say to them, "it's a stroke of mercy and a stroke of luck. You need two things," I say: "what do you mean?" "The stroke and the bounce." Then they look blank. Well, what I like to do is to muddle things up when what they want is to sort things out.

Whether El Fakir's words are seen as garbled nonsense, prophetic riddles or simply everyday wisdom (and his tone of voice certainly suggests the latter), he reminds us that reality, like cinema, cannot be 'reduced' to any one formula or interpretive framework: the reality of the filmmakers' 'primitive' man is far deeper than their superficial snapshots suggest. While *Agarrando Pueblo* was received by Gabriel as a corrective device within an inevitably revolutionary-minded Third World Cinema, many in Colombia saw it as a critique of the didactic excesses of 'Third Cinema' itself.

This point, in fact, was the key concern of a rift within the New Latin American Cinema 'movement' almost from the very start. In an interview in *Cuadro* magazine, published alongside the screenplay of *Agarrando pueblo*, Mayolo delineates two tendencies in militant cinema that had emerged since the Mérida festival in 1968. The first, represented by films such as *Now* (dir. Santiago Álvarez, Cuba, 1965) and *La hora de los hornos*, was 'an agitational and urgent cinema' that subsumed reality into its own discourse, invoking a temporary emotional allegiance rather than a deeper understanding of reality (Mayolo 1978: 24). Such cinema was particularly easy for the First World to co-opt into its exoticist epistemic structures: for Mayolo, the presence of such films on European festival and TV circuits 'created a breeding ground for the miserabilist genre on which the great majority of *sobreprecio* filmmakers strut their stuff', acting as a 'pimp for *pornomiseria*'. As a result, Europeans saw Latin American militant films with 'charitable, rationalist eyes,...ready with their codes to interpret us' (1978: 24 and 26). The second strand, represented by *Chircales*, *Ukamau* (but pointedly only this, 'the first Sanjinés') and *El Chacal de Nahueltoro/Jackal of Nahueltoro*, 'truly fathomed the essence of the people', drawing on a documentary tradition stretching back to Flaherty, to create an 'authentic', contemplative film language that allowed the people to speak out through its text (1978: 25). This, indeed, was a debate that was aired by Latin American filmmakers themselves at the 1969 festival in Viña del Mar, in

which a faction led by the Chilean director Raúl Ruiz protested against the Solanas and Getino model which they thought to be based on partisan action rather than involved research into reality (Pick 1993: 1-11). B. Ruby Rich (1997: 278) traces an even earlier split in what later (arguably) cohered into the New Latin American Cinema, comparing Fernando Birri's virtuoso portrayal of urban poverty *Tire dié* (Argentina, 1960) to his subsequent film *Los inundados/Flooded Out* (Argentina, 1961). While *Tire dié* became widely recognised as the key forerunner of the New Latin American Cinema, argues Rich, films like *Los inundados*, which took similar subject matter but in the form of a comedy (and we might include *Agarrando Pueblo* itself within this current), went relatively unnoticed, since for international audiences, the new politicised cinema 'became more acceptable (perhaps more marketable) when it could be packaged as the testimony of victims or the exoticism of underdevelopment' (Rich 1997: 278).[3]

It should be emphasised that the difference between Gabriel's position and that of filmmaker-critics such as Mayolo and Ospina is one of degree rather than of kind, since eventually both debates come down to the question of how far filmmakers allow their agenda to be shaped by the social reality that surrounds them, and to what extent they impose (or indeed are able to impose) their own interpretation on that reality. But rather than Gabriel's concern of whether a film draws on the traditional in order to simply fix it in the past or to further the revolutionary process, many filmmakers in Latin America were more worried about how far that reality, whether revolutionary or not, was allowed to speak for itself. Thus whereas Gabriel was able to celebrate a film such as *La hora de los hornos* for its vanguard harnessing of popular culture to take

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[3] As Mayolo notes in the 1978 interview, the debate between the 'agitational' and 'contemplative' trends was maintained in many Latin American film journals of the time, including *Ojo al cine*, *Cine al día* and *Hablemos de cine*, as well as the French *Cinéma 68*. Analogous but not identical to this debate was the split within the Mexican Super-8 movement between the purist 'Third Cinema'-inspired filmmakers, and those who embraced the psychedelic 'garbage aesthetic' of the Brazilian *undigrudi* movement. This latter current was theorised by Sergio García as 'Fourth Cinema' (see García 1999; Lerner 1999). Robert Stam (1998) argues that while the Brazilian *undigrudi*, whose film-manifesto was *O bandido da luz vermelha/The Red Light Bandit* (dir. Rogerio Sganzerla, 1968), made a significant departure from the Cinema Novo, traces of its 'aesthetics of garbage' can be found in the earlier films.

society one step closer towards the revolutionary horizon, those making and writing about cinema in Latin America had, for more than a decade, already been wondering whether such a model might lead to a dangerous and exoticising misrepresentation of the 'primitive' realities of the 'Third World'. I will now turn to a discussion of how *Chircales*, on the one hand, and *Revolución* and *Ukamau*, on the other, intervene in the debate over the primitive and the modern, the local and the national, and the aesthetic and the political.

Chircales: Anthropology in the entrails of the nation

As Julianne Burton (1976) remarks, to watch *Chircales*, as an outsider to the world it portrays, is to bear witness to a '"barbaric", "medieval", "sub-human"' reality that lurks in the entrails of the purportedly modern Colombian state. The documentary's protagonists are the Castañeda family, brickmakers (*chircaleros*) struggling to eke out a miserable existing in Tunjuelito, an 'urban *latifundio*' on the outskirts of the Colombian capital Bogotá. *Chircales* combines a profound and complex understanding of the Castañedas' daily lives (the upshot of Rodríguez's long and ongoing training as an anthropologist) with a clearly-defined contextualisation of their plight within both national and continental political frameworks. It thus enacts and engages with the tension (raised by Gabriel, as well as by Mayolo and Ospina) between a participatory-observation documentary approach and a wider, externally-imposed interpretive schema.

The tensions and internal contradictions latent within the text of *Chircales* are somewhat cloaked by Jorge Silva when he declares that the film 'is just a question of testifying a reality that was objectively like that' (Valverde 1978: 319). Yet it is hard to deny that, like most of the films the duo made together, the sound and image tracks are

each and mutually deeply layered and multi-vocal. The film demonstrates at every turn the intricate detail of the Castañedas' work, beliefs, fears, hopes, joys and tragedies, without for a moment losing sight of Rodríguez and Silva's wider political thesis: that these lives are the leftovers of modernity, of the embarrassing and unseen underbelly of the discourses of national development proclaimed by the Colombian state.[4]

One of the film's most fascinating sequences, and perhaps its most controversial, comes when María and Alfredo Castañeda's daughter Leonor completes her First Communion. It is preceded by some of the film's most harrowing images: the Castañedas' children, some of them barely five or six years old, help their parents haul their bricks up to the kiln for baking. The camera moves into intimate close-ups of their faces; it pans across, swinging up and down to closely follow the movement of the man unloading the bricks that are stacked up on the back of one of the children, himself barely big enough to lift them; a medium shot of María now shows her waiting to be unloaded, her own stack of bricks stretching above her head. The years of trust established between the filmmakers and the Castañedas is etched into the faces of the children: their impassive looks of resignation to their fate testify that they are far beyond putting on any sort of exotic 'show' for the camera. As María moves out of the kiln she momentarily casts a disdainful glance down at the camera, which is shooting her from a low-angle, perhaps comparing her drudgery to the easy lives of the filmmakers. On the soundtrack now there is dissonant string and wind music; now a siren blares; now an authoritative male voice-over gives a sociological analysis of the health hazards of their work and the lack of protection given to children. Most haunting of all, though, are the periods of absolute, claustrophobic silence that punctuate the entire film, letting these horrific images speak for themselves, giving the viewer no

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[4] For Rodríguez's and Silva's thoughts on the links between their films and national politics in Colombia, see González (1973); Caicedo and Ospina (1974); Rodríguez (1977 and 1978); Valverde (1978: 303-353); and Burton ed. (1986: 25-34).

channel to escape into scientific rationalisations or to siphon off their emotion into the trembling music.

But as the sound of the siren fades into slow, rousing choral music the family's labour – one of the daughters being loaded up with bricks once more – takes on a different dimension. The church music at first appears to be part of an ironic, externally-imposed sound montage; yet it quickly acts as a sound-bridge into the next scene: the camera delves restlessly around Leonor's brilliant white communion dress, lying on the floor of the family's shack waiting for her to wear it in celebration of her great occasion. As she speaks of her devotion and gratitude towards God, the cinematography subtly draws out the irony of her misplaced conviction: the camera roams curiously around the Catholic icons on the filthy brick walls inside their home; a montage insert of her bearing a stack of bricks as she trudges up the hill points out the false illusion that Catholicism instils in its believers. In the next scene the family proudly don their Sunday best and eat the celebration cake, while the soundtrack is given over to the radio they are listening to: the presenter announces that Colombia has been placed in a state of siege, banning all public, political and religious meetings. A grandiloquent government publicity announcement follows: 'Social change comes with deeds, not with words!'[5] The juxtaposition of this faintly absurd, formalised family gathering against the abject backdrop of the brickyard, with the empty rhetoric of national government, highlights the yawning gulf between the state's modernising development agenda (the radio proclaims low-interest housing loans and scientifically-proven remedies for colds and bronchitis) and the everyday reality of the people it claims to represent.[6]

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[5] All translations from *Chircales* are taken from the film's English release.

[6] For the communion sequence the directors had to stage a reconstruction on the basis of still photographs taken at the event, since the film camera they used that day was faulty. Although Rodríguez and Silva claimed that this did not impinge upon the rigour with which the film documented reality (Caicedo and Ospina 1974: 40; Valverde 1978: 317-318), this does raise questions as to how far the irony of, say, the

The Castañedas, though, are not unspeaking emblems of political didacticism. The lingering shots of them remind us that the religious ceremony and the radio. however misleading, provide a glimmer of dignity to their almost unbearable lives. The ensuing scene shows Leonor skirting round a corner after the 'ceremony', her white dress resplendent in the brilliant glare of the sunshine. An image of a tiny boy standing on cracked, dry earth, hoisting an immense slate onto his shoulder, tilts up to show Leonor walking across a pathway above him, still incongruously bedecked in her communion dress. She walks now towards the camera in an over-exposed medium shot, seeming to slice the barren earth that surrounds her in two. Dissonant clamouring and whirring noises on the soundtrack disorient us: suddenly we cannot reduce her to a rational level of scientific analysis. Children and adults alike stare at her as she walks past, appearing as an angel that has been mistakenly cast into this living hell.

As Burton notes, such cutaways, oneiric sequences and changes in register serve to prevent the viewer from falling into a distanced, voyeuristic passivity, and to push us into engaging mentally with the world portrayed (1990: 72). For her, and for Pick, *Chircales*' use of multiple voices makes the film a crucial stage in Latin American documentary's gradual breaking down of traditional hierarchical expositional or realist modes (Pick 1993: 41-47). Burton argues that since Latin American documentarists saw themselves as custodians of national identity, their search for documentary realism was inextricable from their view of what constituted nationality. For the 1950s pioneers (she raises Birri as an example here), 'the key to *la realidad nacional* was thought to reside in a simple inversion: turning the official version on nationhood and national culture on its head in order to reveal what had previously been unseen, unheard, regarded as unseemly' (Burton 1990: 78). There was, therefore, little need to renew the idiom in which reality was documented.

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radio announcement during the 'feast' is a naturally-occurring feature of the Castañedas' lives, and how far it is an expression of the filmmakers' vision.

Yet as Burton herself suggests in her essay, *Chircales* is far from a populist diatribe that idealises the Castañedas as some 'authentic', untouched national reality. María and her daughters speak at length of Alfredo's violent drunken behaviour; and such cultural artefacts as the family does possess (the Catholic icons they rescue from their abandoned home) are portrayed as 'visible symbols of their alienation'. Their participation in national elections is seen as a sham: an early sequence sees Alfredo declare that his adherence to the Liberal Party is due to generations-old family tradition rather than an engagement with national issues; and later on it is revealed that the system of neo-feudal patronage by which the *chircaleros* live compels them to vote on the command of their landlord on pain of eviction. As Rodríguez observed, these people's social, cultural and educational level was 'very basic': having fled from rural violence to the city, they were generally illiterate, with no notion of worker organisation or rights (Rodríguez 1978). Their relationship with the dominant culture (the lure of Catholicism to the poor; *machismo*; political affiliation) is defined by a system of attractions and repressions too complex to be subsumed into any univocal political discourse. *Chircales*' poetic dimension thus hints that the 'national reality' of which the Castañedas and those like them are a significant part, is not a tangible substance that can be packaged into a 40-minute documentary and preached to the masses as a ready-made ideological tool.

Rodríguez and Silva, of course, had their own political standpoints and agendas. The film begins with a quotation from *Das Kapital*, and a caption at the end that cites the radical priest Camilo Torres, who initiated the research project in Tunjuelito that Rodríguez and Silva joined, before throwing in his lot with the Cuban-inspired guerrilla group the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), and was killed in battle shortly afterwards (and when the film was still in its early stages) in 1966. The caption, reading

simply 'La lucha es larga, comencemos ya',[7] was displeasing to Colombian critic Umberto Valverde, who otherwise considered *Chircales* to be 'the most important film in [the history of] our cinema', since 'strictly speaking [the Torres insert] has nothing to do with the structure of the film, [...] it is a concession, I believe, to the dramatic effect of the final scene, which to some might seem pessimistic' (Valverde 1978: 30). Just as Martínez Pardo criticises the communion scene for using the filmed reality as 'an instrument to signify something that is external to it' rather than 'constructing out of reality' (1978: 307), Valverde suggests that to introduce Torres here is tantamount to propagandistic proselytising.

What this viewpoint perhaps does not take into account, though, is that the entire methodology that informed that production of *Chircales* was inspired by Torres' own, unashamedly partisan approach to sociological research. While critics such as Valverde and Martínez Pardo tended to try to triangulate a socially committed film criticism with a search for an objective, realist use of the medium, Torres was actively opposed to what he called a 'sociology of fear disguised as objectivity'.[8] For him, the function of the social sciences was to tackle the problems of underdevelopment, collective apathy and fragmented social relations at the same time that the researcher overcame class differences with their objects of study: a committed approach that squared up with Rodríguez's own belief that anthropology's Eurocentric claims to scientific objectivity were impotent in the face of the reality of imperialism in Latin America (González 1973: 75; Rodríguez 2002).[9] Torres' commitment to the brickmakers is inseparable from class analysis, meaning that for him, and for Rodríguez and Silva, the closing slogan 'La lucha es larga, comencemos ya' is one more part of the filming process. It is

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[7] 'The fight is long. Let it begin'.
[8] Quoted by Pick (1993: 43).
[9] The inconsistency of Rodríguez and Silva's attitude towards objectivity should, however, be pointed out. While they are often at pains to reject scientific objectivity with all its Eurocentric implications, at other times their Marxist analytical framework compels them to claim that their own anthropological work is 'scientific' and 'objective'.

also intimately linked to *Chircales*' social function, since the directors claimed that for them, the film's most important achievement was its consciousness-raising work among the workers themselves. As a result of making the film, the brickmakers of Tunjuelito eventually formed a trade-union, and the Castañedas' wider awareness of their situation became such that, as Rodríguez admits, their eviction was a direct consequence of their involvement with the film.[10]

Nonetheless, *Chircales*' high level of aesthetic accomplishment and experimentation with documentary form meant that its impact travelled far beyond the immediate surroundings of Tunjuelito. The film's avowedly partisan sociological analysis is not reduced to the economic or political spheres. Both the overtly partisan slogans and voice-overs, *and* the poetic strands of the documentary, are seen as arising organically out of the film's penetrating observation. The (potentially revolutionary) reality that *Chircales* portrays consists of both the objective conditions of squalor in which the Castañedas live, and the fantasies that make them human – however escapist and 'alienating' they may be. As Arbeláez and Mayolo argue, the (reconstructed) communion scene 'places itself within [the documentary qualities] in order to enrich it poetically. [...] Dodging the mud to ensure that her dress stays perfectly white, [Leonor's] skirt soars as she walks through the ravines. What are the dreams of these brickmakers if not the white dress that wishes not to be sullied by the mud of their everyday lives?' (1974: 49). As Michael Renov argues in the case of the documentaries of Jean Vigo, Dziga Vertov and Joris Ivens in the 1920s, and Chris Marker in later decades, *Chircales* combines rationalist political aims with the unconscious delirium of poetic experimentation (Renov 2004: 93-103). The fact that Rodríguez and Silva's documentary has remained so relevant to audiences far removed from the problems of

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[10] For commentators more interested in the wider, propagandistic potential of *Chircales*, though, the immediate use-value to the *chircaleros* was of less interest than the theoretical insertion within a Marxist framework. This is certainly apparent, for instance, from the line of questioning in an interview given by Rodríguez and Silva to *Cine cubano* (González 1973).

Tunjuelito are remote may well derive from the 'deep yet fugitive desire' that lies at the heart of documentary reception (Renov 2004: 103). Whether the film is received by a brickmaker in 1960s Colombia, an intellectual in 1970s France, or a viewer of the 'Maletas del cine colombiano' in the twenty-first century, the poetic escape of Leonor's dress is sure to strike a chord.

However much the insertion of Camilo Torres' urge to take arms was a result of the liberation theologian's own involvement with the Tunjuelito project, the film inevitably inserted itself into a wider national imaginary. Torres' advocacy of the Cuban-Revolution inspired ELN stemmed from a fierce rejection of the developmentalist rhetoric of the reigning National Front.[11] The narrative trope of the radio that appears throughout *Chircales* reminds us that the Castañedas' existence is inextricable from the government's modernising agenda, and from any societal sense of national improvement. The 'reality' that *Chircales* presents to us belies President Lleras Restrepo's radio declaration, heard in the film's opening sequences, that 'here we don't have a caste system [...] rigidly stratified like in other countries. [...] Those who say 3% of the people are owning 60 or 70% of the land in Colombia are [...] just ignorant / badly informed'. Even if the filmmakers themselves did not set out to impose an overarching theoretical framework over Tunjuelito, it is hard not to read *Chircales* as drawing on the basest negation of Lleras' national modernising conceit.

The Castañedas, and those who empathise or sympathise with them, are called upon to imagine a new, revolutionary reality, in which they overcome their ideological alienation as part of the long process of building a utopian, emancipated society. Yet perhaps most seductively, there is also room for the family's personal fantasies, their

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[11] The National Front (1958-1978) was a bipartisan pact between the hegemonic Liberal and Conservative parties that ensured that executive power was retained by the ruling oligarchy. After some ten years of vicious internecine bloodshed between the Liberal and Conservative factions, the agreement was intended to end the barbarity of the *violencia* and usher in a new era of peace and reconciliation, bolstered by rapid social and economic development (Bushnell 1993: 223-248). For an exhaustive historical and sociological account of the *violencia*, see Guzmán Campos, Fals Borda and Umaña Luna (1962).

own psychical methods of escaping from their everyday drudgery. Political documentary is not merely a matter of social actors engaging in rational ideological debate: it is also a measure of their dreams.

Revolución and *Ukamau*: *Indigenismo* and the avant-garde

If *Chircales*' modernist approach to film form is fed by a wholehearted rejection of existing models of modernity, pointing out that its triumphalist rhetoric is built on the sand of medieval social relations, *Revolución* and *Ukamau*, I believe, partially insert themselves within and harness certain tropes of modernity and national cohesion. National critics certainly announced both films excitedly as emblems of both artistic and political renovation. *Revolución* (1963), made out of fragments of footage filmed while making propaganda documentaries for the state lottery, and edited according to theoretical precepts of Soviet montage, was billed for an early La Paz screening as 'Bolivia's first experimental film', at once a 'masterly ...poem' and a 'true social art' with a 'deeply national meaning'.[12] *Ukamau* (1966), produced under the auspices of the ICB, was celebrated by Luis Espinal for its 'excellent plastic qualities...that remind us of filmmakers like Bresson and Dreyer...[which] uncovers to us a new land, contemplated with love' (Mesa ed. 1982: 135-136).

While Sanjinés' later films were influenced by utopian dreams of continental liberation, the rest of this chapter will argue, the announcements of aesthetic and political newness in these early films can be more usefully traced back to Bolivia's National Revolution, instigated in 1952 with the coming to power of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) and (arguably) ending with General René Barrientos' rightwing coup of 1964. I will therefore ask to what extent these films – both made before the New Latin American Cinema had become a discernible

[12] Productoras Cinematográficas Luz y Sombra (1964).

continental tendency and before Che Guevara's arrival in Bolivia in October 1966 [13], and both produced and/or distributed via state or state-supported institutions – might be considered as part of a national and revolutionary project.

This is not to suggest that the films ideologically identify with the MNR regimes, nor still less with that of Barrientos, which somewhat surprisingly appointed the proven troublemaker Sanjinés to the directorship of the state-run Instituto Cinematográfico Boliviano (Bolivian Institute for Cinematography, ICB) in 1965. By 1964, the time of *Revolución*'s release, many of the MNR's erstwhile supporters had grown disillusioned with the regime's inability to consolidate its initially radical reforms. The 1956-1960 government of Paz's successor Hernán Siles Zuazo had been forced by rocketing inflation to submit to the austerity demands of the International Monetary Fund. When Paz returned to office in 1960 his opposition to the unionised workers and miners grew such that he invited the US armed forces to infiltrate the command structure of the Bolivian army in order to help fight off the armed workers' militias that had partially supplanted it (Klein 2003: 221-222). Barrientos' railings against the dangers of Communism, not to mention his violent repression of worker and union movements and economic 'open-door' policy, earned him even fewer friends on the intellectual left (Dunkerley 2000). Yet in the aftermath of the 1952 revolution but before the devastatingly repressive dictatorship of Hugo Bánzer in 1971-1978, there was still a belief among a national left that was gradually turning its attention towards revolutionary movements occurring elsewhere in Latin America, that a new and more equal society was possible within the national framework developed by the MNR. As leftist nationalist historian Rene Zavaleta argued, for all the failings of the 1952-1964 project, it did lay the groundwork for the emergence of Bolivia's 'national classes' (the mining and urban proletariat, and the indigenous peasantry), who constituted 'the

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[13] Sanjinés has linked his radicalisation as a leftist intellectual to Che Guevara's presence (and assassination) in Bolivia in 1966-67 (Garcia and Núñez 2004).

subjective basis' from which the Bolivian people can 'orientate itself within the continental insurrection' (Zavaleta 1967: 94).

This section, and the thesis as a whole, takes into account that the notion of a 'national' cinema is a contested terrain. Former Bolivian president and erstwhile film critic and historian Carlos Mesa rejects what he sees as the received view that the 'New Bolivian Cinema' began with *Ukamau*. Instead he traces the origins of a modern national cinema back to the creation in 1953 of the ICB, whose films 'gradually built up that consciousness that was to explode in Sanjinés' work' (Mesa 1985: 51). He deftly periodises the independently produced *Revolución*, as well as *Ukamau* and all of Sanjinés' subsequent films, within a post-1952 tradition whereby the inexorable historical time of national cinematic history progresses from the originary moment of the Nationalist Revolution. Sanjinés indeed acknowledged the practical benefits of the MNR's investment in cinema, yet the 'national' character he frequently identified in his own films would seem to have a rather different implication; his calls for specifically Indian emancipation sit uneasily next to the post-1952 efforts to create an ethnically homogeneous national proletariat. In turn Sanjinés' Marxist-*indigenista* vision, in which a privileged Indian class would lead *all* the national proletarian classes in an uprising against the imperialist enemy, was resisted by the radical *indianismo* that was gaining ground on the predominantly Aymara *altiplano*.[14] *Indianismo*'s principal ideologue, Fausto Reinaga, saw the Bolivian nation as a fictitious, colonised entity, entirely separate from the 'Indian nation', and considered Marxism as one more attempt to assimilate the Indian into the political and epistemological programmes of the colonised white-creole-*mestizo* minority (Reinaga 1969).

The rest of this chapter will discuss how *Revolución* and *Ukamau* respond to and renovate previous *indigenista* and revolutionary imaginings of the Bolivian nation.

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[14] *Indianismo* found its most radical expression in the *katarista* movement, which emerged under the Bánzer dictatorship as an initially urban movement, and is led today by Felipe 'El Mallku' Quispe. See Javier Sanjinés (2004), especially ch. 4.

Anderson (1991: 47-65) argues that the origins of Latin American nationalisms lie in the elite imaginary of the 'creole pioneers', unlike the bottom-up European nationalisms that were propelled by the spread of print capitalism and mass literacy. If the national-revolutionary movements of the twentieth century can be seen as attempts to mobilise the popular classes as the imagined bedrock of the national body, the MNR's populist project is often traced back to Bolivia's defeat against Paraguay in the Chaco War of 1932-35. The war mobilised and geographically united the rural and urban 'national classes' for the first time, enabling them to become politically aware of the ruling classes' exploitation of the masses. This mobilisation facilitated the subsequent inter-ethnic alliances that would overthrow the oligarchic structures of society (Dunkerley 1984: 26-28). Eager to throw historical and intellectual weight behind its new revolutionary nationalism, the MNR began to rethink the nation via early twentieth century reformist Bolivian intellectuals such as Franz Tamayo.[15] Tamayo sought to overturn the positivist tradition, represented by thinkers such as Alcides Arguedas, that dismissed the Indian as a pre-modern being whose irredeemable barbarity could only hinder the advancing national project (Arguedas 1936). Tamayo's democratisation of the national imaginary poses the *mestizo* as the foundational building block of the unified national subject, crediting the Independence movements to an ideal *mestizo* citizen who 'still thought like a Spaniard, but now felt like an Indian' (Tamayo 1944: 169).

Reinaga's radical Indianist reading of *indigenista* writers such as Tamayo and the Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui (and presumably this would be extended to Sanjinés) argues that

> they seek the *integration* of the Indian into their mongrel race [cholaje]; to de-Indianise the Indian to miscegenate him [acholarlo]; for the *cholo*

[15] See Javier Sanjinés (2004), especially the Introduction.

> sub-race to assimilate the Indian race...No *indigenista* wants the liberation of the Indian. (Reinaga 1969: 137-8; emphasis in original).[16]

Recent studies of *indigenista* art, literature and essays in twentieth century Bolivia have viewed it as a rhetorical tool employed by the elite intellectual and political classes, often in creating a homogenising, *mestizo* national imaginary. Javier Sanjinés argues that *indigenismo*'s discourse of *mestizaje* aims to legitimate the Western logic of rationality and modernity, while disciplining and containing the potentially menacing Indian viscerality that exists within the modern nation by converting the Indian into 'an ideal image, an exalted spiritual figure' (Javier Sanjinés 2004: 36). Josefa Salmón likewise acknowledges the discursive authority that homogenising *indigenismo* stamps on its indigenous subject. But she also points out that the Indian presents a textual threat to the writer, since

> there is also a flow from the most downtrodden groups towards the elite, [...] the author does not have complete control over the object of their discourse [...] [The Indian] escapes, becomes unknown or altered in the mirror of the author. (Salmón 1997: 18).

Revolución and *Ukamau*, films made by an 'elite' filmmaking collective and via state or state-supported institutions, employ aesthetic techniques derived from European modernist and avant-garde traditions to chart the cultural and revolutionary 'authenticity' of their indigenous and subaltern protagonists. I argue here that their status as 'national' films reflects a curious set of ambiguities as regards acceptance and refutation both of the foreign and of the homogenising *mestizo* ideal; and accommodation with or rejection of officialdom. Their use of anti-naturalist aesthetic devices, such as montage and expressionistic photography, raises the possibility of an art of national liberation that engages the viewer on the irrational level of the

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[16] In the Bolivian ethnic hierarchy the *cholo* occupies an indefinite 'in-between' space between the Indian and the *mestizo*. Often intended as a description of ethnicity (whiter than an Indian but more Indian than a *mestizo*), its use says as much about the speaker's stance as regards social hierarchy as it does about the person described. Used by someone 'higher' on the social scale it is often used in a derogatory way to refer to a 'dirty' racial mix, as opposed to the 'cleaner', whiter *mestizo* (see Weismantel 2001: 90-98). Reinaga's Indianist discourse apparently employs the term to cast a derogatory slant on all racial mixing.

unconscious in a way that the Ukamau Group's 1970s films tried to circumvent. I will discuss the degree to which the indigenous subjects of *Ukamau* are able, along the lines drawn out above by Salmón, to appropriate the 'national' framework within which they are inserted.

Fragmenting the national myth

The explicit referent of the ten-minute black-and-white short *Revolución* is the 1952 Revolution, which saw the MNR sweep to power on a popular coalition of left-wing intellectuals, revolutionary workers' groups and indigenous peasants anxious to be free from the semi-feudal system of land tenure that had persisted since Independence. Yet made in the years of the left's growing disillusionment with President Víctor Paz Estenssoro's decreasingly revolutionary MNR government, this was far from simple flag-waving for the regime. Unlike the majority of Bolivia's cinematic output of the period – ICB propaganda newsreels – *Revolución* is subtle and ambiguous, and can be read as an implicit critique of the foundering revolutionary process.

The ICB served primarily to produce newsreels promoting and consolidating the revolution across a population that was both geographically dispersed and largely illiterate in the official language. For the MNR's revolutionary government, 'the importance of cinema, in our present transition towards development, lies in its ability to link ideas with realities, its didactic and documentary messages reaching every stratum of our nation' (quoted in Rivadeneira Prada 1994: 19). The MNR's first presidential term from 1952-1956 saw unprecedented state investment in cinema as Paz Estenssoro looked to the propagandistic allure of the image to maintain a grip on the fragile network of pacts between the many conflicting political groupings and associations that kept his party in power. They reconstructed the revolution *a posteriori* as a coherent march forward to national progress, overlooking the almost accidental

fashion in which the MNR took power and instituted reforms; with time the mythical signifier 'Revolución' became increasingly severed from a recognisable referent.[17] For Mesa 'the word "Revolution"...became common currency; its endless repetition came to devalue the deeper meanings it had acquired during the first two years of basic reform' (1985: 53). The newsreels were a tool of ideological nation-building that aimed to tackle Bolivia's 'social thinness' by recasting the revolutionary nation from above as 'a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time'.[18] The post-1952 nation was to be 'imagined' in the minds of the ICB's viewers as a coherent body of like-minded individuals moving together in transition towards development in the safe guiding hands of the MNR. Their bombastic voice-overs and linear narrative structures were designed to create an unquestioning revolutionary spirit in their spectators (Mesa 1985: 52).

It was this spectatorial passivity that *Revolución* sought to uproot. A 1960 article written by the young Jorge Sanjinés is seeped in the liberatory rhetoric of the European avant-garde; his dismissal of theatre's artificial barrier between stage and audience have clearly Brechtian overtones:

> On the stage we see unfolding before us the drama of people alien to our subjective point-of-view; we are spectators who feel sorry or happy for them, but we do not see through their eyes, we do not feel what they feel. Since we do not take part in their lives on a subjective level, we are capable only of distanced contemplation. (Sanjinés 1960)

However cinema, Sanjinés proclaims, can stir the viewer to a visceral participation with the images, its capacity for spatial and temporal manipulation creating 'the impression of seeing events *from within*, as if we were surrounded by the characters in the film'. (Sanjinés 1960: original emphasis). Brecht's dissatisfaction with classical theatre – 'Empathy alone may stimulate a wish to imitate a hero, but it can hardly create the

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[17] For Córdova, the ICB newsreels strove to 'counterpoise a unitary image of the Revolution to the chaotic internecine struggles within the left, right and centre members of the MNR coalition' (2002: 193).
[18] Anderson (1991: 26), borrowing from Walter Benjamin's essay, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' (1999: 245-255).

capacity' (Brecht 1964: 247) – mingles with Walter Benjamin's belief in the cameraman's ability to extend our comprehension of the world, 'penetrat[ing] deeply into [reality's] web. [...The picture] of the painter is a total one, that of the cameraman consists of multiple fragments which are assembled under a new law' (Benjamin 1999: 227).[19]

Underlying this visceral artistic language was the grammar of montage, whereby 'through the juxtaposition of two distinct and separate frames we can extract a new concept that was not present in either of them' (Sanjinés 1960). Both the shot-to-shot relations and the entire narrative structure of *Revolución* are charged with the theoretical principles of Kuleshov and Eisenstein, avidly read by Sanjinés while studying in Chile. The film's initial sequence shows images of poverty, exploitation and humiliation: a man crawls out of a mineshaft; a family sifts through rubbish in search of food. A man walks past the camera carrying a large package on his back; cut to another three men, carrying even larger loads. Another man bears an even larger burden still; the pattern continues through a further three shots edited together in similar style. The next two shots show ragged, poverty-stricken men and children looking pitifully towards the camera; then a beggar hobbles up to a smartly dressed man in a shop doorway. To see a man carrying a huge package on his back through the streets of La Paz is an everyday occurrence. Yet by rapidly cutting together five such images, then a beggar humiliating himself before a rich *paceño*, the editor exploits their symbolic potential: the poor and desperate are destined to shoulder the burden of the rich, whose wealth can derive only from their poverty. As with Kuleshov's psychological building-blocks, the viewer's emotional reaction to successive shots depends not only on the image itself but on the preceding one, which remains imprinted in the viewer's mind.[20] For Sanjinés, by

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[19] The essay cited here is 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (Benjamin 1999: 211-244, first published 1936).

[20] See Sanjinés' essay 'Sobre el cortometraje', in Gamboa (1999: 28-33).

mentally assembling the images the viewer has seen them 'from within': the camera has created a heightened involvement with and understanding of reality.

The film picks up pace as a shot of two children sleeping rough on the street cuts to a carpenter hard at work in a workshop. In the background we suddenly notice a row of coffins on a shelf above his head; then a cut to a close-up of the coffins. The camera pans slowly across them and we realise from their size that they must be the coffins of children, the martyrs of a cruelly unequal social system; the camera lingers on the golden crosses embellished on the front. A stark cut throws us back to close-ups of the children's faces from the previous sequence. A cut back to the workshop scene shows two children carrying a tiny coffin outside, perhaps bearing a baby that has died of starvation: society's devotion to the cross has evidently done little to help its poor.

The logical effect of these images might be, along Kuleshov's lines, 'poor children + coffins = children dying'. Yet the cumulative effect of both sequences described thus far links these infants' tragedy to the wealthy bourgeoisie whose burden they are forced to bear. The petty-bourgeois carpenter, perhaps, is profiting from this social injustice: he too is partly responsible for the perpetuation of class oppression. Beyond Kuleshov's mere '*unrolling* [of] an idea', these images' specific referents (beggar, coffin, cross) have engendered abstract and emotive concepts (class, economic and religious oppression) that 'arise from the *collision* between independent shots' (Eisenstein 1963: 49). For Eisenstein juxtaposing shots through montage bestows upon them an abstract, symbolic quality that only becomes apparent through the spectator's reflective engagement, a 'liberation of the whole action from the definition of time and space' (1963: 58). The imagined passive spectators are transforming into an engaged, class-conscious, and potentially radical mass, their rational understanding of their own predicaments translates into an abstract, emotive urge to act against oppression.

So far, so in keeping with the 'national meaning' of the ICB newsreels, their cheering masses celebrating the heroic victory over pre-revolutionary Bolivia's oligarchy. *Revolución*'s third sequence cuts from the child coffin-bearers to a populist politician addressing the assembled hordes in a city square: the leader dominates the foreground screen-right as the masses loom below. This is cross-cut with low-angle shots of the politician from the crowd's point-of-view, and close-ups of individual onlookers, staring or cheering at his words. In levelling itself with both the politician and the multitude, the camera identifies us with both perspectives: the leader incorporates the people into the all-embracing national myth. The following sequences show the popular uprising violently repressed; then the revolutionary martyrdom of heroic prisoners shot dead by firing-squads and mourned in street processions. A factory-siren acts as a rallying call for the rising of the proletariat as workers gaze off-screen in hope of a better society ahead, their faces lit up by the solidarity of revolution. Men in suits seize arms and urban guerrilla warfare commences. The fighters stand, rifles poised, ready to usher in a new era.

If the uprising is the Bolivian one of 1952, the film's final images sully its triumphalist sheen. We return to images, almost identical to those of the initial sequence, of poor, barefooted children as they gaze uncomprehendingly at the camera; correspondingly the music reverts from an upbeat drum rhythm to the mournful guitar music of the film's opening. Yet we do not see these images in the same light as before: filtered through the whole popular and political process of the previous twelve years, the cumulation of images hints that the 'top-down' rebellion inspired by the politician in the unquestioning masses (the National Revolution) is no longer enough. In retrospect the politician looks impotent; the 'new era' has failed to address the needs of the poor and the people must take control of their own destiny. Just as Eisenstein's montage urges the spectator to participate psychologically and emotionally in the assembly of

images and meanings, Sanjinés' viewers must be conscious and committed agents of liberation. They would not merely witness a revolution, but they would, through the intellectual labour unleashed by montage, experience and feel the abstract *notion* of revolution 'in a free accumulation of associative material' (Eisenstein 1963: 61). This is not the *fait accompli* of 'The (National) Revolution', but the concept, the ongoing aim, the ideology of 'Revolution'.

Revolución, with its symbolic cinematography and editing, compels the viewer to engage in an altogether new evaluation of post-Revolutionary Bolivia, and its implications go far beyond the 1952 uprising. Sanjinés' plot summary of the film makes not a single reference to historical circumstance, glossing its argument in abstract humanistic terms as 'the unavoidable need for armed struggle to put right the wrongs of the present and to guarantee the future of those barefooted children' (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 237-247).[21] As director of the ICB from 1964-66, Sanjinés would go on to make such conformist documentaries as *Realizaciones*, a celebration of a Barrientos-backed social housing project for peasants. Yet he was never a straightforward institutional filmmaker, instead treading constantly a fine line between stooping to the national project and calling for international anti-imperialist insurrection. Young MNR activists viewing *Revolución* in intellectual circles enthusiastically embraced the film; yet a nervous Paz Estenssoro opted to ban it in 1963 (Sánchez 1999: 80-81). Whether this was motivated mainly by its concrete critique of post-1952 Bolivian politics or its more general (perhaps more dangerous) ideological call to arms is unclear; but post-1968 screenings in Latin American and European festivals certainly read the film as an internationalist insurrectionary invective. The

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[21] When screening their films in Ecuador in 1975, Sanjinés noticed that the indigenous audiences ignored national specificities, concentrating instead on their wider political implications. After seeing *Revolución*, one peasant remarked, 'You don't need to know Quechua or Spanish, or be an Evangelist or a Catholic, to realise that what we saw in the film is the misery of someone who lives on the edge... The politician talks and talks and he can't take up the rifle...but the factory workers walk away from their lathes and go around uniting themselves to fight with sticks and iron bars!...It's like a photograph of Ecuador!' (Sanjinés and Ukamau Group 1989: 55-56).

film's open narrative structure, allowing its meaning to be separated from the specific context of the 1952 Revolution and applied forwards to the continental revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 1970s, led it to be considered a precursor to the New Latin American Cinema (see Córdova 2002: 202).

While Sanjinés' primary aims were national in scope, then, his films' aesthetics enabled readings that transcended the national sphere. *Revolución* was screened in Bolivia to some 30,000 people in mining areas, factories and universities (Huleu, Ramonet and Toubiana 1974). Elite spaces such as the Cine Scala in La Paz were appropriated for intellectual audiences, although such screenings were not necessarily 'progressive' or leftwing affairs: for instance *¡Aysa!*, produced by the ICB, was first screened in Bolivia in June 1965, alongside the ICB documentary *El nuevo soldado/The New Soldier*, celebrating the collaboration between the Bolivian Army and the US-funded 'Civic Action' programme (*Presencia* 1965). Even so, the director later likened his project – using cinema to consolidate the revolutionary sentiment of a geographically dispersed, largely illiterate and linguistically diverse population – to that of Soviet filmmaker Alexander Medvedkin, whose cinematographic train was 'able to film, process and edit the films that he made on his voyage around the liberated country (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 40; Sanjinés 1978: 18; see also ch. 4 below). That *Revolución* is silent, and that much of *Ukamau*'s impact derives from its striking visual and rhythmic qualities, suggest an undermining of what Shohat and Stam call the Eurocentric 'fetish of writing'[22] – a privileging of the 'learned', scientific, written culture implicit in the authoritative, rational voice-overs of the ICB newsreels. Whereas many of Sanjinés' later films attempted to incorporate indigenous narrative forms into the very grammar of film language, *Ukamau* and *Revolución* employ irrationalist techniques imported from the European avant-garde and modernism. In bypassing the

[22] They refer to Martin Lienhard's assertion that the European colonisers of the Americas 'turned *écriture* into a form of possession, "sanctified" by the religion of the book in whose name it was undertaken' (Shohat and Stam 1994: 68).

linguistic hierarchies inherent in the written tradition of the nation, these democratising aesthetics (as well as the abstracted theme of class and racial oppression) seemed well suited to a subordinated national population that lived by oral and visual culture.

Yet they are not uncomplicatedly 'national', since those same aesthetic and thematic concerns appealed to a wider contingency of Latin American peasants and European intellectuals. Moreover *Ukamau*, spoken mostly in Aymara, in a sense captures the indigenous language as part of Bolivia's national heritage; but at the same time it expands the boundaries of linguistic identification into Peru, while often excluding non-Aymara speaking sectors of the 'national' audience.[23]

Towards a popular indigenous melodrama

Even so, in his institutional role as head of the ICB, Sanjinés attempted to foment the simultaneous emergence of nationalism and social consciousness. As Fanon (a key ideological reference for the emerging New Latin American Cinema) wrote in 1961,

> It is only when men and women are included on a vast scale in enlightened and fruitful work that form and body are given to that consciousness. Then the flag and the palace where sits the government cease to be the symbols of the nation. The nation deserts these brightly lit, empty shells and takes shelter in the country, where it is given life and dynamic power. (Fanon 2001: 164-165)

Ukamau perhaps sought to convert the brightly lit, empty shell of the ICB into a vehicle of radical consciousness, trying to steer the drifting national revolution towards the shelter of the country. Sanjinés' films, both during and after his time at the ICB, would consistently proclaim that the 'life and dynamic power' of Bolivia resided in the mining proletariat (*¡Aysa!*; *El coraje del pueblo*) and the indigenous peasantry (*Ukamau*; *Yawar Mallku*).

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[23] However, *Ukamau*'s recourse to 'universal' commercial narrative techniques meant that although it was screened in a 1979 Sanjinés retrospective without Spanish subtitles, a (non-Aymara speaking) critic for the La Paz daily *La Razón* found that 'everything about it is intelligible' (Gamboa 1999: 139-141).

Revolución and *Ukamau* anticipate the New Latin American Cinema's inspiration in 1920s-1930s European experimentalism, in Brecht and Benjamin's belief in 'the hidden dialectic between avant-garde art and the utopian hope for an emancipatory mass culture' (Willemen 1991: 11). I will now address some of the contradictions residing in this dialectic. If *Revolución* was problematic in treating the masses as homogeneous, *Ukamau* endows the aestheticised Aymara with the mythical status of national saviours. Echoing Mariátegui, *Ukamau* injects the aesthetics of the European avant-garde into indigenous Andean culture, harnessing the former's irrationalism to undermine the universalising mythology of bourgeois Western rationalist thought. The cultural hybridity that Mariátegui embraced sought to transcend the absolutism of monocultural thought, presenting Marxism and Andean cosmovisions as contrasting mythologies out of which the new Peruvian national myth might be built. For the Peruvian Marxist-*indigenista* thinker – often cited by Sanjinés as an intellectual influence – any art that rocked the foundations of the spirit of rationalism that underlay Eurocentric bourgeois art and culture (he particularly admired Dadaism) was capable of 'rescu[ing] imagination for art and politics, choked as it was by the cult of Reason' (D'Allemand 2001: 43).[24]

Sanjinés was to grow deeply dissatisfied with the real impact that *Ukamau*'s imported avant-garde aesthetics could have in creating a genuinely emancipatory mass culture. Barrientos, however, saw sufficient subversive content in *Ukamau* to sack Sanjinés from his institutional post and (eventually) to dissolve the ICB. *Ukamau*'s aesthetics, I would argue, uphold some of the colonial epistemological assumptions underlying the MNR's myth of a common national destiny, expressed through the (limited) post-1952 agrarian reform. [25] Yet on another level these same non-realist

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[24] See Mariátegui (1959), especially 'Arte, Revolución y Decadencia', pp.18-22. See also Mariátegui (1968, first published 1928) and D'Allemand (2001: 25-57).

[25] The Barrientos regime sought to uphold this imagined national community even as it violently repressed organised labour, consolidating a peasant support base through a peasant-military pact (See

aesthetics, together with the film's denunciation of the white/*mestizo* minority's oppression of the indigenous, urge us to rethink the Indian's subordinate role in the national imaginary.

The film's story revolves around Andrés Mayta, an Aymara Indian from an *ayllu* (indigenous community) on the Isla del Sol, the legendary homeland of the Inca Empire on Lake Titicaca. One day when Mayta is away in nearby Copacabana, his wife Sabina is assaulted and raped by the local *mestizo* trader Rosendo Ramos, on whom the *ayllu* depends to sell its produce. Mayta returns to find Sabina lying on the floor outside their home, and she is able to tell Mayta her aggressor's name before she dies. A year passes by and despite the community's meetings to decide how to deal with the crime, Mayta says nothing, and continues to live his everyday life. One day as Ramos is leaving the community, Mayta ambushes him and exacts his revenge, killing his wife's murderer with his bare hands. The narrative symbolism could scarcely be clearer: the greedy and socially-mobile *mestizo* Ramos rapes and murders the indigenous community; the inevitable response is violent uprising and the death of the oppressor. [26]

Sanjinés (1968: 29) cast Ramos as 'the coloniser', representing the 'creole-*mestizo*-Western culture' clashing with 'Indian culture'. The film, more crudely than any of his others, poses Bolivian society as totally polarised, categorising the indigenous population as virtuous, pre-Hispanic, uncorrupted and threatened by Imperialism; whilst the white/creole/*mestizo* side of the dichotomy is exploitative, corrupted by the West, and in league with imperialism to extinguish the Indian race. Indians are idealised for their 'impermeability to Western culture'; it is in their untouched moral strength that Sanjinés sees the basis from which to renovate the

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Rivera 1984: part 3). Yet for all his opposition to the Indians' cooptation into Barrientos' national alliance Sanjinés notably avoids reference to the emerging Katarista movement, which strongly resisted the peasant-military pact (see ch. 3).

[26] However as an Aymara-speaker whose wife wears the *pollera* (skirt) characteristic of *cholas*, Ramos might well have been disdained as a *cholo* or *indio* by his social 'superiors'. In casting its villains as *cholos*, *Ukamau* seems to work along the rigid creole-Indian binary that cements Bolivian racism and naturalises mythical biological hierarchies. See Weismantel (2001: xxviii-xxxix).

Bolivian nation. 'When the Indian people rises up, its folklore will take on a dynamic quality, creating a new culture' (Sanjinés 1968: 33).

The racial binaries underpinning *Ukamau*'s narrative depict the indigenous as structurally separate from, and exploited by, the 'modern' nation. The cinematography both reflects and exaggerates the natural qualities of the landscape, converting the setting into a symbolic landscape expressing and shaping the lives of its inhabitants. The characters' fates are, until the final scene, seemingly inscribed into the expressionist mise-en-scène that paints them as telluric beings unrelated to modernity. Slow, sweeping establishing long-shots pan and track across the austere scenery; the naturally harsh, high-contrast light of the *altiplano* is stylised and translated into a metaphor for the Indians' stoical resistance of their conditions. Sabina's funeral march is shot in twilight with a low-level camera in extreme long-shot, so that the thin strip of dark land along which the silhouetted mourners trudge, single-file, is dominated by the vast, dark, clouded, menacing skies overhead. The swirling wind and slow, foreboding wind instruments playing on the soundtrack foreshadow the vengeance to come. Likewise the indoor scenes of the village leaders' meetings are illuminated with expressive low-key, high-contrast lighting, casting the Indians' deep-set features into small patches of bright light against heavy shadows, as if to announce the obscure and arcane nature of their millennial wisdom. Here the diegetic light of the candle or fire is most often supplemented with a dim fill-light to distinguish the characters' faces. Yet at the moment of greatest dramatic intensity, a close-up on the right side of Mayta's face as he grapples with the moral conundrum of whether to reveal the identity of Sabina's murderer, this latter light disappears, leaving the hero's face almost indiscernible, morally ambiguous, in the flickering candlelight.

Like the protagonists of melodrama, *Ukamau*'s Indian protagonists appear at the mercy of their fate, unaware of the greater forces at work upon their lives. In classical

Hollywood melodrama, protagonists' emotions were expressed not through the eloquent, lettered perorations of 'higher' narrative forms, but through visual and aural excess (for instance, the deeply expressive landscapes imported from German expressionism). As Córdova points out, it is the excess in *Ukamau*'s cinematography and editing that acts as a surrogate for the characters' incapacity for self-expression;[27] the heightened and often dissonant music, also imposed from beyond the diegesis, adds to the tension.[28] The camera feminises the powerless Indian as it repeatedly closes in on a powerless Sabina in dramatic close-ups, casting her as emblematic of an impotent race in contrast with the dominant, masculine gaze of the omniscient viewer. There are traces of the positivist *indigenismo* of Alcides Arguedas' 1919 novel *Raza de bronce*, depicting the indigenous as destined to suffer, their primaeval culture set in stone, the relic of a distant past to be 'understood' by an enlightened present. Mesa (1985: 84-86) characteristically canonises *Ukamau* within a progressing national *indigenista* tradition, asserting that it merely 'analyse[s] and reth[inks]...the Indian problem through a new lens', working towards a perfection of 'what Arguedas' *indigenismo* discovered in a misguided way...and what the [1952] Revolution substantially altered'.[29]

But *Ukamau*'s visceral visual references back to Arguedas often contradict rather than revise his earlier 'discoveries'. Unlike Arguedas' sociological tract *Pueblo enfermo* (1936), *Ukamau* does not conclude that the Indian's status as a 'natural', illiterate being obstructs his integration into the written tradition of the (creole) nation.[30] The film's political inflection, and its ultimate denunciation of the rape and exploitation of the Indian, would seem to have greater resonance with the *indigenismo* of the post-

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[27] She identifies *Ukamau*'s partial reproduction of melodramatic narrative in the triangular formation of male villain-female victim-male rescuer, and in the progression of the schema happiness/innocence-transgression-suffering-slow, tortuous build-up to revenge (Córdova 2002: 206).

[28] Monsiváis, writing on Jorge Negrete's Mexican melodramas, writes that it is precisely the existential excess in those films' music and songs that differentiates them from their Hollywood equivalents (2000: 60).

[29] Gumucio (1983: 209-214) also argues that *Ukamau* is an Arguedian film, pointing out its idealisation of the Indian and vituperation of the *mestizo*.

[30] Paz Soldán (2003: 73-94) gives a valuable analysis of Arguedas' *Pueblo enfermo*.

Chaco War era, in which the environmentally-rooted Indian became a symbol of national virtue and authenticity in the face of transnational capital and the anti-national oligarchy (Salmón 1997: 93-110). For instance, Javier Sanjinés argues that for Franz Tamayo, the telluric Indian is no longer a picturesque museum piece or a pre-modern leftover, but now the muscular, irrational 'body' whose shoulders would bear the rational *mestizo* intellect. This hybrid being, a corporeal metaphor for the national imaginary, would carry Bolivia towards progress and modernity (Javier Sanjinés 2004: 54-61). Yet if Tamayo's vision broadly defines the MNR's conceptualisation of Revolutionary Bolivia, *Ukamau*'s denouement presents a different, more radical vision: here the muscular Indian acquires the intellect too, rising up *against* the colonised *cholos*, *mestizos* and creoles to create the new nation (almost) on his own terms. Arguedas' telluric mythology of the Indian is in one sense continued, but in another, through a series of ruptures and revisions, it is turned on its head.

We might argue too that it was precisely *Ukamau*'s imported experimental expressionist aesthetics, 'copied en-masse from glossy record sleeves...sold in the industrialised world as much as in Andean communities' (Harris 1985: 35), that allowed the film access to national production, distribution and publicity infrastructures, enabling its political message to be inserted into the 'national' imaginary. Before *Ukamau*'s release the mainstream press, doubtless expecting an Arguedian elegy to a lost Indian past, had no qualms in publishing folkloric publicity stills of Indians; after the premiere angry and disappointed journalists accused Sanjinés and his colleagues of being 'unpatriotic, denigrators of the country' (León Frías 1979: 87). Sanjinés has commented that it was largely the film's 'unchristian' ending that displeased the Barrientos regime, who would have been satisfied had Ramos died by falling from a precipice (Pérez 1971: 55).

The film's use of montage reflects Sanjinés' interest, shared with Benjamin and Mariátegui alike, in cinema's ability to harness the creative, associative and analytic powers of the unconscious. Early in the film when Mayta visits Copacabana he enters a mask-maker's shop; the camera pans across the grotesque carnival masks on sale. A track in to medium close-up shows him turn towards the camera, trying on a white death mask. This shot cuts to a near graphic match of Ramos, turning towards the camera in medium close-up, in the scene that will eventually lead to his rape of Sabina. The mask shot is brief and the cut away to Ramos unexpected; the use of a cut rather than a fade or dissolve in the transition to the next scene underlines the symbolic association between the two shots (a presage of evil, the omen of revenge…?) Henceforth these two scenes are cross-cut until Mayta returns to find his wife dying outside their home; the link between them is sustained on a symbolic (an image of knives on sale in Copacabana market cuts to the beginning of the rape scene) as well as a narrative level. As Ramos and Sabina square up to one another before their struggle, ominous extreme-close-ups of a pair of eyes, a mouth, the side of a face, are quickly edited together, reminding us of a shot earlier in the scene from Ramos' point-of-view as he watches the bare lower legs of Sabina while she walks away from him. The speed of the cutting abstracts the eyes and mouth from their owners' bodies. The rapid movement between them, recalling Sanjinés' use of montage in *Revolución*, intensifies our involvement in the scene.

Similarly, the scene of Mayta's final revenge over Ramos begins with an extreme long-shot of the two characters from a gratingly high angle, before cutting to a close-up of their bare-knuckle fight. As the struggle intensifies the shots become shorter: at first each image of the fight is chronologically related to the next; but as the climax approaches, logical narrative progression dissolves. As Mayta conclusively smashes Ramos' head against the ground the villain's head becomes that of Sabina: the

earlier scene of her rape and murder, absent until now from the film's narrative, is fleetingly edited in. The trauma that was withheld and repressed can now finally become revealed in a cathartic uprising; suddenly the equation is no longer simply 'abusive Ramos + angry Mayta = revenge', but a more abstract 'white/*mestizo* rape of Indians + raising of Indian consciousness = Indian insurrection'. As for Benjamin, the rhythm of the editing prevents the viewer from lingering on and contemplating any one image. Unable to 'abandon himself to his associations' (Benjamin 1999: 231) he is propelled into an oneiric, heightened presence of mind, incorporating the irrational workings of his unconscious into his 'logical' and linear knowledge of the plot. In rejecting rationalism in its portrayal of the Indian, *Ukamau* reflects Mariátegui's proposal that realist art, rather than an index to an absolute truth, is a politically-inflected cult of reason and knowledge that upholds bourgeois capitalist systems of government, no more valid or 'truthful', say, than the systems of ancestral belief around which indigenous cultures and social systems revolved (see D'Allemand 2001).

In this sense *Ukamau* also evokes melodrama's roots in late seventeenth-century popular theatre, granted access to elite exhibition spaces only on condition that dialogue be excluded, thereby maintaining the purity of 'true theatre'. Performance style and mise-en-scène thus usurped the spoken word as the key to identification with its protagonists; popular theatre became opposed to rationalist bourgeois cultural forms with their elevation of the cerebral and repression of the emotional (Martín-Barbero 2003). The 1920s avant-garde of the likes of Breton and Buñuel converted the emotional and the irrational into political statement, as opposed to the merely reactive (even commercial) strategies of the seventeenth century popular dramatists.

Ukamau applies direct political statement back to melodrama, embracing the European avant-garde's hopes of aesthetic liberation. It injects these aspirations into Latin American melodrama's historical function as a popular drama of recognition: at

once a stratagem by which the lower classes were able to reflect themselves in an increasingly commercialised mass culture, and a family-based mediation between the everyday experience of the masses and the monumental time of history, of the national narrative that passes them by. By expressing the oppression and rebellion of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia allegorically through Andrés and Sabina, *Ukamau* perhaps seeks to draw the indigenous viewer into a personalised appreciation of their historical role in the monumental progress of the nation, harnessing cinema's power to 'theatrise' the nation through a popular and abstract mythology of the Indian and proletarian masses. [31] At the same time the heady, rhythmic montage described above, particularly in the climactic revenge scene, seeks to convert the personalised identification of expressionist melodrama into a generalised, communal desire to take up arms. 'You'll pay for this', the government minister muttered to Sanjinés under his breath at the premiere of *Ukamau*. 'You're rousing the Indians!' (Pérez 1971: 55).

The partial rejection of rational, linear narrative as a guiding principle is also the key to the film's *indigenista* aesthetic. García Pabón (2001) argues that *Ukamau*'s narrative structure partially incorporates Andean cultural parameters:

> The importance the film's narrative gives to expectancy does not derive from an idealistic mythology of Indians, which would portray them as being impenetrable and taciturn while expecting who knows what destiny, but rather waiting represents an important element in Sanjinés' whole aesthetic project, which tries to understand and transmit the experience of Aymara time.

This may overstate the extent to which *Ukamau* avoids a stereotypical depiction of its indigenous protagonists, but it does point out a crucial continuity between *Ukamau* and the sociologically more insightful *La nación clandestina* (1989, see ch. 4 below). With *La nación* Sanjinés rejects outright the notion of temporal-historical progress enshrined in Western philosophy, striving instead to create a narrative structure originating in the

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[31] See Martín-Barbero's periphrasis of Carlos Monsiváis' discussion of Mexican melodrama (Martín-Barbero 2003: 265-270). For the popular, often subversive roots of European and Latin American melodrama, see Martín-Barbero (2003: 151-162).

Andean spatio-temporal concept of the cyclical restitution of a past utopia. *Ukamau*, with its expressionistic photography and emotive montage, lacks the later film's engagement with Andean philosophy. But like *La nación*, it has a slow, measured rhythm and pace that relies relatively little on the cause-and-effect narrative structure of classical Hollywood (or mainstream Latin American) cinema, whose system of continuity editing splits diegetic time into fragments, reassembling them according to the laws of dramatic tension but under the banner of reality.

As such, *Ukamau* is more reminiscent of the heterogeneous *indigenismo* identified by Antonio Cornejo Polar in the writings of the Peruvian José María Arguedas, whose novels infused Quechua thought patterns and knowledge structures into the written Spanish language. Cornejo Polar valorises an *indigenismo* that self-consciously injects indigenous elements into the fabric of foreign or dominant forms and idioms (Spanish/Hollywood/European avant-garde), as do Sanjinés' films, over one that tries to 'authentically' translate, reproduce or falsify indigenous narrative forms or speech patterns directly into the dominant language. A heterogeneous *indigenismo* rejects realism's search for authentic, mimetic depiction, instead finding aesthetic and political creativity in the collision between Hispanic and indigenous cultures. Such expressions display 'a different kind of authenticity, more complex, that derives from the…assimilation of certain forms that belong to the referent. Underlying these forms is a subtle artistic process that is clearly as, or more, important than realism' (Cornejo Polar 1982: 85). The cultural forms of the (indigenous) 'referent' erupt through and deform the dominant language (Spanish), disabling the latter's authoritative claim to 'know' the colonial Other. *Ukamau*, 'written' in a baroque fusion of realist, avant-garde, melodramatic and *indigenista* cinematic idioms, seems to revel in its heterogeneity, its political will to simply tell the story of the Indians' repression and rebellion constantly

compromised by an auteurist impulse to exploit the expressive potential of cinema's artifice.

Breaking through the text

Revolución, with its rapid-fire editing and rhythmic seduction, privileges its director's formal and political design over a profound cultural analysis of its referent. *Ukamau* too is highly stylised, and its aesthetic treatment of the Indians and the *altiplano*, imported from European traditions as much as borrowed from indigenous culture itself, tends to drown out its protagonists with authorial symbolism. As Jorge Sanjinés noted, 'in our first films we used a language that was culturally inappropriate to our people;...we realised that our work was only appreciated by the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois strata of our country, not by the peasants and workers with whom we wished to communicate' (Sanjinés 1978: 20).

Javier Sanjinés (2004: 54-62) notes that Franz Tamayo's eulogies of the irrational Indian element in his *mestizo* national imaginary derive not from a study of Andean philosophies, but from his readings of Schopenhauer and nineteenth-century German irrationalism. On these terms we might conclude that *Ukamau*, like Tamayo, can only explain the Indian from the outside, making him into 'something useful for constructing modernity' (Javier Sanjinés 2004: 62); it can only think its Aymara subjects from the epistemological framework of the European-educated intellectual. For all that it subverts the MNR's imagined homogeneous peasant-worker national class, or Barrientos' harmonious relationship between the Indian peasantry and the state, by its very nature it cannot but present the Indian as a latent force waiting to be awakened by the vanguard revolutionary in order to progress towards victory. It fails to break down the hierarchical division of revolutionary labour whereby knowledge, analysis and understanding are the preserve of the outsider while the Indian contributes his resolute

will, his noble courage, his reflexive knowledge of his environment. It still entertains the possibility that a 'truly' revolutionary nation might be a suitable backdrop for the Indian struggle.

Even so, by locating their irrationalist formal structures *outside* of the disciplinary political mythologies of eternal revolutionary progress and the national *mestizaje* ideal, *Revolución* and *Ukamau* prepare the ground for a new, transnational field of artistic and political struggle that exceeds the epistemological frontiers of nationhood that had characterised Sanjinés' *indigenista* forebears. Their specific production and distribution conditions, of course, fed them back into oppositional national political agendas; but their aesthetics, particularly those of the later film, enable meaning to be abstracted to the generalised plane of continental, indigenous and international struggle. If *Ukamau*'s imported irrationalist aesthetics are unable to create a 'genuinely' emancipatory mass culture, their attempts to harness the unconscious for political means at least hint at an alternative to the teleological, universalising mythology of the linear national story narrated on Western terms. Some of the logistical problems and cultural impositions inherent in such a project will be sketched out in coming chapters. For instance, Sanjinés' use in later films of what I will call 'Andean realism' brings us to the contradiction identified by Patricia D'Allemand (2001: 48) in the writings of Mariátegui, whose denunciations of realism's dulling and alienating effects fall short of explaining why most *indigenista* writing has resorted precisely to realist or naturalist narrative form. Yet as Indians, *cholos* and working-class audiences continue to flock to Sanjinés retrospectives in Bolivia, it is clear that his films still form part of an alternative collective memory of those 'left behind' by the rhetoric of modernity and progress.

The continued popularity of Sanjinés' films in Bolivia appears to lend weight to Salmón's thesis, outlined above, that however co-optive *indigenista* texts may be, the

Indian inevitably 'escapes, becomes unknown or altered in the mirror of the author' (1997: 18). These films' ability to transcend realism (*Ukamau*'s intensely aestheticised use of light, shadow and music; or *Chircales*' intermittent escapades into the unconscious) is undoubtedly down to the vision, skills and education of the artists and technicians who made them. But paradoxically, it may well be precisely these finely-wrought aesthetic qualities that allow their indigenous or proletarian subjects so effectively to escape through their texts, suggesting that the complete collapse of the hierarchy of revolutionary labour is not necessarily liberating per se. As the next chapter will suggest, as the Ukamau Group and the Silva/Rodríguez team grappled to reconcile European-derived ideas about politics and aesthetics with the brute repression and poverty that they discovered before them in Latin America, the gradual dissolution of hierarchies entailed all manner of methodological and textual problems.

Chapter Three

Class, race and a cinema with the people

In the first part of the 1970s, it was clear that both the Bolivian and the Colombian authorities, like those of many other contemporary rightwing regimes in Latin America, felt sufficiently threatened by the subversive activities of leftist militant filmmakers to ensure that the production, distribution and exhibition of their films was as risky and unpleasant a business as possible. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the rightwing coup by Colonel Hugo Bánzer in Bolivia in 1971 prompted Jorge Sanjinés into exile to complete the postproduction of *El coraje del pueblo* (1971), rightly fearing the consequences, as a high-profile revolutionary intellectual, of Bánzer's clampdown on his opponents. Although his erstwhile collaborators Antonio Eguino and Óscar Soria managed to continue making socially-committed cinema during the *banzerato*, they constantly trod a fine line between self-censorship and overt critique, and in 1975 Eguino was briefly jailed for his roles in producing and clandestinely distributing a print of *Coraje*.[1] In Colombia a number of filmmakers including Carlos Álvarez, Julia de Álvarez, Gabriela Samper and Manuel Vargas were imprisoned in 1972 by the National Front regime of the conservative Misael Pastrana on charges such as membership of and collaboration with the ELN guerrilla, and 'making subversive cinema that vindicates criminal acts'. An international campaign saw most of them released in a matter of months, although Carlos Álvarez (who certainly had closer ties to the ELN than did Samper, known for her ethnographic documentaries rather than for subversive invective) languished in jail

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[1] See Gumucio (1979: 58-62); Ospina and Guerrero (1978); and Burton ed. (1986: 161-169). Eguino was, though, in prison for only two weeks, before national and international campaigns secured his release. For more detailed discussions of Ukamau Ltda's films, their 'cine posible' and its negotiations with national authorities, see Gumucio (1983: 271-283) and Mesa (1985: 103-119).

for some fifteen months, until January 1974.[2] Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva did not suffer imprisonment themselves, though they certainly had their brushes with the authorities, and their efforts, with *Planas*, to bring the massacre of a group of Guahibo Indians in Meta Department (in the Eastern Plains) to the attention of the nation was met at every turn with government censorship.[3]

Rightwing governments' animosity towards these cineastes is understandable, given the filmmakers' increasing disillusionment with the idea that the left could institute effective social change through an accommodation with existing national political infrastructures; the admiration that many of them openly expressed for the Cuban Revolution; and the proselytising campaigns of which their films formed a part in trade-union, peasant and student environments. The fact that *Chircales* opens with stock footage of the populist leftwing dissident liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, who was gunned down in Bogotá in 1948, just as he was poised to become the next President of the Republic, and ends with by invoking Camilo Torres' call to arms, reflected a belief among sectors of the radical left that the hegemonic bipartisan rule of the Liberal and Conservative political elite, which Gaitán had spectacularly promised to break, could not be ruptured by electoral means.[4] Likewise, the closing image of Jorge Sanjinés' *Yawar Mallku* (1969), a still image of indigenous peasants raising their fists in revolt, leaves the viewer in no doubt that violence is the only means for the underclasses to bring about change.

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[2] See the dossier of documents reprinted in *Cine cubano* ('Colombia y la democracia' 1974); as well as 'Si no "canta", sufrirá agujas en las uñas' (1972); Martínez Pardo (1978: 243 and 309); King (1990: 210); and Samper (2004).

[3] By Rodríguez's account, the filmmakers were interviewed by radio and television about the Planas atrocity, but both programmes were pulled before going on air. Silva, though, did manage to publish his photographs of the tortured Indians in the press. See Rodríguez (1978: 39).

[4] Gaitán's assassination triggered the *Nueve de abril*, the nationwide outburst of violence (abroad frequently called the *bogotazo*), which evolved into the prolonged period of bitter feuding between the hegemonic parties known as the *violencia*. However, Bushnell (1993: 201-204) dates the *violencia* back to 1946, with the coming to power of the Conservative President Mariano Ospina Pérez. The period is widely thought to have ended in 1958, with the inauguration of the National Front. For an exhaustive sociological account of the *violencia*, see Guzmán Campos, Fals Borda and Umaña Luna (1962).

Even so, in Colombia the cosy power-sharing agreement and rotation of executive office that had operated since 1958 as the National Front, combined with the USA's efforts to curb continental subversion via the Alliance for Progress, had managed to incorporate large sectors of the left into its corporatist machinery. *Bipartidismo* meant that the urban left never enjoyed the popular appeal that it had in many Latin American countries. In the countryside, even though the Soviet-aligned Colombian Communist Party was loosely allied to the main guerrilla force the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), which had roots in peasant self-defence groups during the *violencia* and which by now controlled a handful of isolated rural areas, the Communists' efforts to protect Colombia's trading relationship with the USSR compelled them to declare in 1967 that there was no revolutionary situation in Colombia (Angell 1994: 199-200; Bushnell 1993: 223-248). Meanwhile in Bolivia, the intellectual and Marxist left's exuberance over the 1952 Nationalist Revolution had mainly petered out, although its alienation from national politics enjoyed a hiatus in some quarters during the leftist regime of General Juan José Torres from October 1970-August 1971 (Rivera 1984: 119-120; Albó 1987: 388-390). Moreover, as I will outline in more detail below, while peasant movements in both countries flirted at various junctures with Marxism, they too worked hard at maintaining their stake in national politics, through mechanisms such as the peasant-military pact in Bolivia (Albó 1987), and the initially government-sponsored Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos (ANUC) in Colombia (Zamosc 1986).

The Cuban-inspired revolutionary left thus faced something of a challenge. Cuba's 1959 Revolution fuelled existing social struggles within Latin America with a utopian drive to end the enormous social inequality, urban shantytowns and rural poverty that bedevilled much of the continent. The guerrilla groups that waged war on national governments in the 1960s were, of course, hugely heterogeneous in

composition, and some were led by grassroots leaders of peasant movements, while others were headed by figureheads from the intellectual elites. But most of these movements were to some degree characterised by an often uneasy process of accommodation between the utopian ideals originating from the revolutionary intelligentsia, and existing class- or ethnically-defined political movements – a predicament partly explored in the Ukamau Group's *El enemigo principal* and (to a lesser extent) *La nación clandestina*. The images and mythologies of revolutionary icons such as Che Guevara and Camilo Torres were (often brilliantly) exploited by filmmakers such as Jorge Sanjinés and the Marta Rodríguez/Jorge Silva team, but the movements that those figures spearheaded had frequently met with tepid reactions from peasant and indigenous masses whom they would liberate.[5] A crucial part of these filmmakers' missions was to bridge, or at least account for, the gaping hole between the poverty-stricken rural and semi-rural masses on the one hand, and the internationalist ideologies proclaiming their imminent liberation, on the other, signalling the way for peasant and indigenous groups to take on a key role in the struggle against oppressive national political and financial regimes.

For Sanjinés, 'a people's culture becomes the most powerful ideological construct that can sustain and develop its *identity*, and the fundamental basis of its liberation struggle' (n.d., emphasis in original); while for Rodríguez the best documentary cinema is one which 'penetrates the roots' of 'our own culture' (1977: 123). As *indigenista* Marxists, these directors styled themselves as Gramscian organic intellectuals on quests to activate the fragmented 'common sense' beliefs of the masses through the radicalisation of their popular culture, working towards the construction of a

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[5] Torres was martyred for the Colombian ELN in 1966, a year before the Bolivian military claimed Che's scalp at Ñancahuazú in 1967. By Régis Debray's account, Guevara's base in the Santa Cruz region, far from aiming to take power in Bolivia, was meant to be the headquarters of an ambitious Bolivarian plan to coordinate the activities of guerrilla forces in the surrounding countries (see Dunkerley 1984: 139). For the ELN's lack of popular base and the general problems of the Latin American revolutionary left, see Bushnell (1993: 244-245). For a general discussion of the challenges facing Latin American guerrilla movements in the late 1960s, including Che's troubled relationship with Bolivian peasants, see Fals Borda (1968: 47-82); Angell (1994).

common will consistent with the apparently emergent and popular forces of Marxism. In common with their contemporaries of the so-called 'New Latin American Cinema', they thought of cinema in function of its potential for social transformation. As Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino wrote of their own radical cinema in Argentina, film was an ongoing process of forging a class identity among its viewers/protagonists, so that meaning was not inherent to the filmic text but latent, waiting to be built out of the productive encounter between filmmaker and the people:

> To transmit results or conclusions while hiding the process whereby they were created is just one more expression of an old, mystifying culture. A film that is concluded within its own structure relegates the viewer to a passive and specular role, giving him the option to approve or decline. A film that transmits experience and knowledge that are not yet completed, *unfinished*, and that invites spectators to complete and question them critically, converts the latter into co-authors and live protagonists of that film (Solanas and Getino 1973: 163-164).

As intellectuals working more closely than many of their continental counterparts with indigenous peoples and communities, they had a keen awareness of the great lengths to which they would need to go if they were to forge a coherent, specifically class-based identity among their films' protagonists, given the historical and political mobilising power of other factors, such as race, in their communities. One of the concerns of this chapter, which will focus on *El coraje del pueblo* (dir. Jorge Sanjinés, Bolivia/Italy, 1971) and *Planas: testimonios de un etnocidio. Las contradicciones del capitalismo* (dir. Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva, Colombia, 1970-71), is to analyse the contestation of the two categories of class and race as markers of identity in these films. While indigenous movements have, understandably, usually given race priority in their own analyses, both the Ukamau Group and the Marta Rodríguez/Jorge Silva team often found in their protagonists both a genuine awareness of the wider class implications of their predicaments, and a willingness to put class awareness to productive use. At the same time, while the filmmakers approached their subjects with their own class-based agendas, they did not always push those agendas to

the exclusion of all else. This is not to say that alliances between groups identifying by class and by ethnicity have ever been automatic, easy to forge or even desirable. It is rather, as Stuart Hall comments in his incisive reading of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, that

> so-called 'class unity' is never *assumed, a priori*. It is understood that classes, while sharing certain common conditions of existence, are also crosscut by conflicting interests, historically segmented and fragmented...Thus the 'unity' of classes is necessarily complex and has to be *produced* – constructed, created – as a result of specific economic, political and ideological practices (Hall 1996a: 423, emphasis in original).

These films' strong class discourse becomes about achieving not a '*simple* unity' of the oppressed classes into a homogeneous whole but 'a process of unification (never totally achieved), founded on strategic alliances between different sectors' (Hall 1996a: 437). By focusing in this chapter on *Planas* and *Coraje*, two films whose protagonists identify primarily through race (*Planas*) and class (*Coraje*), I hope to draw out some of the complexity of the class/ethnicity debate.

For Sanjinés, 'popular, collective and revolutionary memory is indeed formed without the need for cinema. But cinema can help to focus [fijar] that memory, turn it into something dynamic, thus helping it to gather momentum' (1983: 42). Rather more subtly, Rodríguez and Silva describe their project as the effort to create 'a poetics in which the formal or "artistic" and the ideological levels permeate the cinematographic work from *within* the analysed reality, not in the subjective manner of *auteur* cinema', but which would at the same time 'unveil the mechanisms of exploitation'.[6]

Another concern of this chapter is to analyse the process by which this 'popular identity' is expressed, and shaped into cinematic form. It will take into account contemporaneous debates in European film theory that dug deep into the textual structure of cinema and lay bare the ideological workings of its claims to verisimilitude:

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[6] Silva quoted in Valverde (1978: 327, my emphasis); Rodríguez quoted in Hervo (1980: 5).

I will therefore ask to what extent it is reasonable to accuse films such as *Coraje* and *Planas* of ideological mystification. Yet I will also take into account Michael Chanan's converse argument that such meta-textual debates as occurred in 1970s European film criticism have little relevance in Latin America:

> In the underdeveloped world, truth is far more immediate and material...truth lies in the relationship with the audience, in the film's mode of address, because the meaning of what is shown depends on the viewer's position...The New Latin American filmmakers...have been worried less about the way the filmic discourse positions the spectator, and rather more about whether it adequately recognises where the spectator is already. (Chanan 1997b: 215)

Even so, behind all these statements lurks a further key issue, sketched out in Chapter 2 in relation to *Agarrando pueblo*: the seemingly inevitable power hierarchy between filmmakers and their 'subjects' that all of these films (and others of the period) critically engage with at best, or simply exemplify, at worst. For Silva/Rodríguez and for Sanjinés, with the exception of a few exemplary writers and filmmakers such as José María Arguedas and Sergei Eisenstein (who influenced Sanjinés), or Jean Vigo and Jean Rouch (key references for Rodríguez), previous artistic representations of indigenous, peasant or proletarian protagonists had largely reproduced colonial hierarchies, with an active and observing filmmaker/artist/writer speaking 'for' a mute and passive subject. Both groups rejected the 'covert elitism' (Shohat and Stam 1994: 34) of traditional ethnographic and pedagogical filmmaking practices, in which the camera's authoritative and controlling gaze appropriated the image of its subjects to create its own narratives.

Lines of authority between those behind the camera and those in front are drawn firstly through the practical aspects of the films' production and distribution. How do filmmakers approach indigenous communities? To what extent do the latter participate in the scriptwriting, mise-en-scène, shooting and editing processes? In whose interests is the presented 'knowledge' or analysis released into the information networks of the wider world? As well as these circumstantial and practical exchanges of power, I will

examine those that operate textually, though the narrative and aesthetic strategies of the films themselves. What, or whom, is the source of the information with which we are presented? Are the films univocal or polyphonous? If the latter, which of the many voices that emerge through the sound and image-tracks take precedence? How is the eye of the cinematographer or the hand of the editor, necessarily interpretive, reconciled with a political commitment to lending equal prominence to the subject's experience and the filmmakers' agenda? In short, to paraphrase the above quotation from Jorge Silva, just how can the poetics of a cinematic work emerge purely from *within* the portrayed 'reality', while the underlying goal is to perform an act of unveiling on a macro-level? Or if, for Sanjinés, 'a film about the people made by an *auteur* is not the same as a film made by the people through the mediation of an *auteur*', how can that *auteur* become simply an 'interpreter, translator [and]... vehicle of the people' (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 61), as if the practical and textual hierarchies implicit in any representation could be bypassed?

Testimonies of Massacre: Contesting class and ethnicity

Coraje and *Planas* both give accounts of, explore the causes behind, and advocate violent protest against, killings of members of politically disenfranchised groups. The organisational presence of Marxist filmmaker-intellectuals lends both films strong underlying narratives of historic and ongoing collective oppression, and the respective emphases they place on class and ethnicity as loci of collective identity vary according to the different historical and political conditions in which they were made. My aim here is to give a brief account of some of the schisms and convergences between these two types of oppositional discourses in Bolivia and Colombia in the first part of the 1970s, and the implications that this scenario has for the complex methodological and textual strategies employed in both films under discussion. Since class-based analysis

tends to homogenise very diverse ethnic and social groups under a single banner, I will discuss the extent to which the films' formal structures allow for the heterogeneity of the Andean popular classes' identities to be heard.

Following the Cuban Revolution of 1959, Latin American Marxism had undergone a major rift. On the one hand orthodox communist parties prioritised mass urban movements and class homogenisation, often viewing the peasantry (Indian or otherwise) with suspicion; on the other, those who advocated the model of the 1959 Cuban Revolution placed the peasantry ahead of the urban masses as the vanguard of popular support for the armed struggle that would lead to the taking of power (Angell 1994). Given the relatively weak position of the national left in the still predominantly rural early 1970s Bolivia and Colombia (see above), and the high level of political agitation and violence in rural areas, committed intellectuals such as Silva and Rodríguez turned their attention to the countryside, where they came to find their class-centric Marxist analytical tools to be inadequate.[7]

Although in these years efforts were made to forge rural/urban and white/*mestizo*/Indian alliances, in neither country was the peasantry, Indian or otherwise, willing to surrender its own historical, social or cultural identities in order to meet the demands of a homogenising national liberation project. Indeed, the nation as a basis for struggle was for these groups at best problematic. In Bolivia, Silvia Rivera notes that the Aymara and Quechua majorities have historically challenged national frameworks by foregrounding their own narratives structured around anti-Spanish or anti-Republican rebellions and the pre-colonial heritage; even in the semi-Aymara capital city La Paz, the 'cultural counterhegemony' of the urban Indian has prevented

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[7] Some of the indigenous protagonists of *Campesinos* objected to the film's fusion of indigenous and non-indigenous peasants, leading to the production, along with the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC) of their following film, *Nuestra voz de tierra, memoria y futuro*. See Bello and Bernal 1982: 7.

ethnic identity from being drowned out by class and national concerns.[8] The *katarista-indianista* movement emerging on the Bolivian *altiplano* in these years successfully mobilised large sections of the population by casting the peasantry 'simultaneously...as an exploited class and as a colonially oppressed ethnic majority' (Rivera 1992: 89). Meanwhile in Colombia, the radicalising, largely non-Indian peasant movement refused to support the leftwing nationalist urban populism of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla's ANAPO against the hegemonic parties at the polls in 1970, and was itself racked by class conflicts between smallholders seeking only limited land reform, and landless peasants demanding deep structural changes in landed property (Zamosc 1996). Indigenous politics were at a low ebb, now too small and fragmented to interest national movements, although for much of the first half of the twentieth century the indigenous leader Manuel Quintín Lame had, through his Cauca Indígena and Tolima campaigns, posed a significant challenge to discourses of national civilisation. The emergence in 1971 and subsequent growth of the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC), which exploited links with but never allowed itself to become subsumed into national peasant, proletarian and anti-imperialist struggles, drew forcefully on Quintín Lame's memory in asserting its own political and cultural difference from non-indigenous sectors (CRIC 1981; Castillo-Cárdenas 1987).

The key point here is that, while on a rhetorical level national liberation and solidarity across class and ethnic groups were relatively prominent in indigenous politics and its intellectual supporters, the encounter between indigenous and Marxist politics was more a process of negotiation and mutual discussion (or mistrust) than a seamless union, or indeed a co-optation of indigenous movements into a Eurocentric master narrative. The discourse of national liberation present in all of these films is substantiated by actual mass political movements to a far lesser extent than, say, that of

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[8] See Rivera (1992: 97). Similarly, Albó points out that although the Indian peasantry effectively kept the homogenising MNR in power following the 1952 Nationalist Revolution in return for the initially radical agrarian programme, it always maintained independence and strategic distance. See Albó (1994: 58).

Solanas and Getino's left-Peronist masterpiece *La hora de los hornos* (1968). *Indigenista* intellectuals of the 1960s and 1970s such as Sanjinés, Silva and Rodríguez, working in countries where race was far more of an issue than in Argentina, tended to analyse the societies they saw with something approaching *katarismo*'s 'two eyes': the eye of the exploited peasant class in alliance with other exploited classes; and the eye of the Aymara 'nation' along with other exploited (and ethnically-defined) 'nations' (Albó 1994: 55). Yet the *katarismo* of the Bolivian *altiplano* was wary of such Mariátegui-influenced attempts to promote the indigenous as the key to creating a new (socialist) national social order, even if these intellectual-filmmakers did tend to take rather more sceptical an attitude than their Peruvian forebear towards the positivistic overtones of historic progress enshrined in the concepts of nationhood and socialism.[9]

While most of the Ukamau Group's films foreground the problematics of the indigenous masses of the Andean countries (with all the class contradictions they entail), *Coraje* focuses on a primarily class-identified mining community. It is at its core a series of reconstructed and dramatised survivors' testimonies of the *Noche de San Juan* (Night of San Juan), the brutal massacre of a (largely indigenous) mining community in the town of Siglo Veinte in 1967. These are cemented together by sequences of virtuoso cinematography and editing, seductively presenting the protests leading up to the massacre as the coordinated actions of a coherent mining proletariat. In subsuming its protagonists' evident indigenous racial origins to their status as peons of a dependent industrial economy, *Coraje* celebrates the historical (and undeniable) class-consciousness of the Bolivian miners. As well as appealing to the *marxisant* circles of the New Latin American Cinema, this position was also consistent to some extent with the prevailing political winds blowing from the left-leaning military governments of Alfredo Ovando (1969-70) and Juan José Torres (1970-71), which

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[9] See the essay 'El problema del indio', in Mariátegui (1968).

sought to draw organised labour into national political participation via the Popular Assembly and the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB). On the other hand these turn-of-the-decade initiatives tended to leave the indigenous peasantry, which had been courted by Barrientos' evocation of the land-reform mythology of the National Revolution via his military-peasant pact, largely out in the cold. [10] Even so, with postproduction completed in Italian exile following Bánzer's 1971 coup against Torres, Sanjinés' final cut made an uncompromising call for a broad solidarity, achieved in Bolivia only sporadically over the years, among miners, students, labourers and peasants, in the fight against the imperialist enemy.

With the Bolivian nationalist left now (as in 1967) suffering harsh repression, *Coraje* offsets the despair of massacre and dictatorship with a utopian internationalism. Towards the film's conclusion a triumphant extra-diegetic voiceover proclaims that the memory of 'el Che' should lead to strength and consciousness, 'forever sowing liberation, true independence'. In one scene, as the miners plan their revolt in a mineshaft they talk of joining Guevara's guerrilla forces in the Eastern lowlands. The sentiment of cross-group solidarity portrayed here certainly has a historical basis: even if miners' and proletarian support for Che's expedition was by no means universal, the presence of the guerrilla forces in Bolivia did contribute to the polarisation of the political spectrum, the radicalisation of the miners' protests and a general strengthening of opposition to the Barrientos regime (Dunkerley 1984: 148-149). Unlike the expressionistic interior lighting of *Ukamau* that sculpted and heroised the indigenous features of its protagonists, at this point in *Coraje* the *absence* of set lighting is converted into a signifier of class solidarity. The only sources of light in this scene are the lamps on the miners' helmets: their proletarian struggle provides a glimmer of possible redemption amid the encompassing darkness.

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[10] See Rivera (1984: 118-121). The film, however, cannot be accused of giving propaganda to any Bolivian government. General Ovando himself is listed, along with the then president Barrientos, as responsible for the Siglo Veinte atrocity.

After a long period spent organising public screenings of *Yawar Mallku* for peasant and worker audiences, Sanjinés (1971: 50) wrote that 'it was precisely this contact with the people that gave us the idea of reconstructing on film the history of the constant repression it has suffered'. With most of *Coraje* made in a relatively favourable political climate in Bolivia, the new film was doubtless intended as both a concrete contribution to the struggle of the Siglo Veinte miners, and a continuation of the Ukamau Group's national evangelising mission, aiming to raise a revolutionary consciousness among the country's disparate 'dominated' classes. When Sanjinés had to flee Bolivia, though, his cinematic front line shifted momentarily to the rather more docile surroundings of the European film festival and television circuits. As Chapter 1 has shown, the emphasis on pan-continental class liberation certainly played well to radical audiences there, with French film critic Guy Hennebelle (1974: 54-56) famously describing *Coraje* as 'one of the twenty most beautiful films in the history of cinema'.[11]

Coraje, then, artfully sets the class mobilisation of the Bolivian miners in the context of an international anti-imperialist struggle involving a worker-peasant-indigenous-student alliance aiming to violently overthrow both the state and its national project. But while such conditions may well have existed in the case of Siglo Veinte, to take this representation as emblematic of miners' politics in Bolivia (as some undoubtedly did) is simplistic. Álvaro García Linera argues that the Bolivian mining proletariat has, since 1952, been strongly nationalist with a relationship of corporatist mutual dependence with the state. Far from being inspired by Guevara-ist subversion, for García Linera most of the miners' anti-government mobilisations (as well as the

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[11] In the event the group's unexpected exile meant that *Coraje* made little immediate contribution to the miners' cause, beyond the purging process of filming itself. Some five years after Sanjinés and his crew had left Siglo Veinte, Domitila Barrios de Chungara, one of the film's protagonists, commented that 'we'd already agreed with them to open the picture in five different places on the same day. But Bánzer's coup came and we lost sight of each other. No one in Bolivia, to this day, has been able to see that movie. I saw it in Mexico, and I like it, because at least we've documented there some accusations that are important to make' (Barrios de Chungara 1978: 170).

consequent governmental repressions) were rather a process of negotiating the nature and dimensions of the miners' stake in the national project:

> If there was ever such a thing as a nation and a state in Bolivia it was thanks to the miners of the large nationalised companies [...] Throughout the era from 1952 to 1990 the miners have internalised, as an inextricable element of their class identity, a close relationship with the state, an ambition to be integrated into the state...as a vassal, a follower, arrogant and bellicose, but as a payer of tribute via negotiated adhesion and consent [...] In general the miners do as they do to remind the state...that it cannot break unilaterally with a pact made during the primordial infernos of April [1952] when the prerogatives and dependencies between dominators and dominated were fixed. (García Linera 2000: 19, 29, 31)

Furthermore, and despite my point above about the lighting in the scene of the miners' meeting, *Coraje* has often been received within a current of militant *indigenismo*. While always foregrounding class as a rallying call for *all* Bolivia's 'oppressed groups', *Coraje* does not completely renounce the hint of telluric heroism and authenticity that tinges his portrayal of indigenous communities. From a contextual perspective, in spite of Sanjinés' many pronouncements against the 'bourgeois' and 'individualistic' nature of auteur cinema, each one of his films, whether in popular or art-house screenings in Bolivia, Latin America or elsewhere, generally were and are experienced as parts of a coherent body of work (that of Sanjinés and the Ukamau Group). This is not meant as a criticism of Sanjinés' (or the Ukamau Group's) working methodology, particularly given the vicissitudes of militant film production and its scant opportunities for distribution. It is simply to point out that, given that all of Sanjinés' other films deal in some ways with indigenous matters, the auteurist context in which *Coraje* is often viewed tends to blur the boundaries between the quite different problematics of the indigenous peasantry and the mining proletariat,[12] particularly

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[12] Sanjinés' 1989 film *La nación clandestina* refers to one of the brief moments when miner-indigenous solidarity was achieved in the La Paz *altiplano*, apparently during the Natusch Busch coup of 1979 (see Dunkerley 1984: 265-270). On the whole, though, a nationwide consensus of the 'oppressed', such as that promoted by the Ukamau Group's films of this period, has been elusive.

where audiences have little specialist knowledge of Bolivian politics. One French critic evoked *Coraje*'s aesthetic with a facetiously rustic turn of phrase:

> Surely it must be our bourgeois taste that is fascinated by the beauty of these Bolivian mountain-dwellers' faces, their curious mix of black blood and red skin; the expressive, radiant, benevolent looks of these human beings who live even today under threat of genocide (Chapier n.d.)

Some of the film's visual tropes certainly bear out this conflation of indigenous and mining politics, as well as fusing fictional and documentary modes of cinema. Before the opening credits, a man with starkly indigenous and sporting traditional *altiplano* headgear walks purposefully towards the camera in a black-and-white close-up, before the shot cuts to a bunch of rifles being raised in revolt, their bearers' arms invisible. The frame freezes; a superimposed title reads 'A Film by the Ukamau Group'. This is the selfsame footage (save the superimposed title) that ended *Yawar Mallku* as a newly awakened Sixto reclaims his indigenous roots and takes arms against the imperialist enemy: the indigenous man is Vicente Verneros, who played Sixto in the earlier film. The following sequence of *Coraje*, the reconstruction of a massacre of a mining community in Catavi in 1942, begins with a breathtaking extreme long-shot of the austere *altiplano* scenery as a group of peasants languidly herd their llamas across the primeval territory. The distant camera pans slowly across, recalling the *altiplano* spaces of *Ukamau* and *Yawar Mallku* that seem to stand for the topographically-rooted authenticity of its inhabitants; the wind whistles gently alongside muted panpipe music on the soundtrack. A cut to the soldiers observing from on high casts them immediately as aloof, controlling, menacing. A group of chanting protesters appears over the brow of a distant hill, their ragged files cleaving the highland backdrop in two as if to jolt the passive primordial earth into an awareness of the present political struggle. As the miners and their families advance a cut takes us into the crowd's midst, who march either side of the camera; this is cross-cut with low-angle shots of the soldiers preparing

for action. The machine-gun fire rips through them and they fall, faintly camouflaged, as if to return to the brown earth. For now they are defeated by the superior might of the soldiers' weapons, but the sempiternal Andean geography stands firm, as inextinguishable as its inhabitants.[13]

Just as *Coraje* seeks to incorporate the miners' trauma into a wider memory of the oppressed classes, the testimonial documentary *Planas* poses as a 'cross-section' of repression based on a single event, 'a piece of counter-information, while the official media were telling public opinion that there was no torture going on there' (Marta Rodríguez, quoted in Caicedo and Ospina 1974: 41). It begins with the camera panning slowly over a colonial-era painting depicting the colonisation and enslavement of the autochthonous peoples of America, and cuts to still images of the military and police proudly bearing their weapons. After the short credit sequence we are shown present-day newspaper headlines reporting widespread killings of Indians in different Latin American countries. An authoritative male voice-over provides the narrative linking past and present conquest: the colonisation, sacking and destruction of indigenous peoples by both Spanish and US empires, while a dynamic and foreboding drumbeat seems to underscore on a visceral level the mounting pressure pushing the indigenous victims of oppression into violent reaction. The heady emotionalism of the introductory sequence then gives way to what forms the basis of the film: an ethnographic and sociological study of some of those who are currently suffering these repressions, the Guahibo Indians of the Colombian Eastern Plains.

The atrocity that the film and its protagonists narrate dates back to 1966, when the indigenous villagers of Planas, led by Rafael Jaramillo Ulloa, organised an

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[13] In fact Sanjinés first met Verneros when the future actor was working as a miner in Huanuni. It is also worth noting that the Aymara-speaker Benedicta Huanca, who represents the rural purity of the indigenous race in both *Ukamau* (as Sabina, the Aymara peasant who is raped by the *mestizo* Ramos) and *Yawar Mallku* (as Paulina, the Quechua peasant who upholds indigenous values in the city) herself hailed from a mining community near Huanuni (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 134-135).

agricultural and fishing cooperative in order to stave off exploitative working conditions, and to keep alive the local economy in the face of the *colonos*: white, *mestizo* and foreign entrepreneurs seeking to extract oil from the Guahibos' formerly 'unproductive' land, while attempting to push back the frontiers of 'civilisation'. In the ensuing years the *colonos*, in alliance with the police and military authorities, began a campaign of persecution, torture, imprisonment and assassination against Ulloa and his collaborators. *Planas* acts both generally, as a denunciation of government repression (backed by multinational venture capital), and specifically, for the Guahibos, as a repository of cultural, social and political memory.[14]

To a much greater extent than contemporary Bolivia, early 1970s oppositional political movements in Colombia privileged class over ethnic discourses, due in large measure to the small size (under 2% of the national population) and geographically dispersed nature of indigenous peoples. The indigenous movement itself had emerged as an offshoot of the wider peasant movement, which first appeared on the national stage with the creation in 1967 of the Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos (ANUC), an attempt by Lleras Restrepo's National Front regime to channel popular peasant support for the 1960s agrarian reform policies into the machinery of national politics. From 1971 ANUC radicalised in overt opposition to the state, with a wave of illegal grassroots land invasions. At the same time its leadership, fleetingly seeking an alliance with the (relatively weak) urban proletarian left, adopted a militant leftist ideology that promoted the peasant classes as key agents of social change. This rhetoric took some time to filter down to the rural masses themselves though, and many small-holding peasants (or those with aspirations to being smallholders) were alienated by the new doctrinal assault on private property. Even so, and despite its own class

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[14] For an exhaustive account of the crimes committed against the Guahibos, which came to a head with a national publicity campaign in defence of the Planas cause in 1969-1970 and a parliamentary debate on the matter in late 1970, see Pérez Ramírez (1971). This radical priest's account of the events is strongly informed by liberation theology and dependency theory.

heterogeneity, both ANUC and the early manifestations of the indigenous movement focused their struggles in the early 1970s on the economic, class-oriented issue of land tenure. As the decade went on, though, the growing indigenous movement increasingly integrated a historical and cultural analysis of race into its territorial claims, and distanced itself from the faltering ANUC.[15]

In this apparent contradiction between class-centric Marxist analysis and millennial indigenous historiography lies a potentially productive framework for thinking about *Planas*, and indeed about all of Rodríguez and Silva's 1970s films. While sharing *Coraje*'s broad political objectives, *Planas*' rather more open rhetorical structure arguably allows for deliberations between Marxist and indigenous perspectives. The synthetic, non-diegetic narrative of the filmmakers presents a persuasive argument of imperialist domination, not unlike that of the Ukamau Group in *Coraje*. The film opens with the denunciation of ethnic repression described above, while a closing montage sequence juxtaposes images from Bogotá's Gold Museum with a US-owned oil refinery, linking Spanish colonial with US neo-colonial sacking of natural resources, always with the complicity of a self-interested 'national' bourgeoisie. Nimbly skirting around the ideological, political, social and cultural divergences and misunderstandings between indigenous, peasant and proletarian movements, the visual narrative (shored up on the soundtrack by an upbeat 1970s funk music score) seductively 'reveals' imperialism as the common and constant enemy. A non-diegetic male voice-over declares that 'the struggle of the indigenous people of Planas is also the revolutionary struggle that will help the popular classes, the proletariat against the dominant oligarchy and Yankee imperialism, take power for the people', echoing the utopian (but ill-fated) hopes of the contemporary left of achieving an indigenous-

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[15] For the peasant movement's radicalisation and consequent alienation of grassroots support, see Bushnell (1993: 232-235). For a comprehensive account of the emergence and development of ANUC, see Zamosc (1986). For examples of the continuous oscillation between ethnic and class analysis within the Colombian indigenous movement throughout the 1970s, see CRIC (1981).

peasant-working class hegemony. By collapsing present-day denunciations of 'Yankee imperialism' into 500 years of indigenous colonial trauma, the montage sequence implicitly casts the indigenous as the true custodians of the national wealth, drawing an imagined continuity back in time from an (idealised) 1970s Colombian nation abused by dependent capitalism to a great but disenfranchised pre-Columbian civilisation. In the style of Eduardo Galeano, dependency theorists and industrial proletariat are urged to take up arms alongside their Indian brothers.[16] The call for international solidarity is expanded to a continental level in an article published by Marta Rodríguez in *Cine cubano*, celebrating the 'new film language' grounded in real Latin American culture achieved in post-revolutionary Cuba's ascendant film industry:

> Cuban documentary cinema...has become..., for many creators of Latin American cinema, a starting point not only insofar as directing but also, crucially, insofar as the current attempts to construct a Colombian cinema, and to organise the workers and Indian peasants...Through Cuban cinema, we can identify for the first time with our own culture, we probe its very roots. For the first time we can see on screen something that is Ours, something aimed specifically at us,...that takes a stand as regards our cultural identity as Latin Americans (Rodríguez 1977: 123-124).

Such geographical and cultural leaps of faith were nothing out of the ordinary in 1970s Latin American leftist circles. In a sense the entire New Latin American Cinema movement was an intellectual network whereby vastly diverse social, political and cultural situations and agendas could be synthesised into persuasive arguments, transported with relative ease, distributed across the continent and incorporated into common strategies for struggle.[17] In the pages of *Cine cubano* Marta Rodríguez acts as a spokesperson for the oppressed (indigenous) Colombians on the international

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[16] For Galeano, 'it is true that there are Brazilian tribes still cut off in the rainforest, communities in the *altiplano* still isolated from the world, [...] but on the whole the indigenous *are* incorporated into the mechanism of production and the market, albeit indirectly' (2000: 77).

[17] Jorge Sanjinés, for instance, relates that at the 1968 Festival of Latin American Documentary Cinema in Mérida, Venezuela, the filmmakers in attendance were surprised at 'the mutual discovery of ideas and works that utterly coincided in the need to orchestrate a powerful anti-imperialist cinema movement'. The director describes the event as 'a manifestation of the misery in which the Latin American peoples lived'. (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 45-46).

intellectual circuit. As a continental hub of radical theoretical discussion, the Cuban publication also had a vested interest in highlighting the most manifestly Marxist and theoretically transferable of Latin American cultural propositions: Rodríguez's article 'El cine cubano' is headed by an extract from the piece reproduced in extremely large typeface, reading 'The only truth is Marxist-Leninism and historical materialism'.

To be sure, for many a Marxist intellectual *Planas* must have offered an inspirational primitivism that celebrated the collectivist spirit of indigenous society, while assuring us that only the doctrine of progress enshrined in Marxist political praxis could enable a societal return to such a utopia. Near the beginning of the film the non-diegetic male voice-over defends the Guahibos against the received wisdom that the indigenous are irrational and uncivilised. The hand-held camera roves around them as they treat poisonous manioc to extract from it a nourishing drink, and the detached male voice-over declares, 'here we observe the scientific nature of indigenous thought' based on 'a long process of observing and understanding nature'. He goes on to announce that 'there is no private property here, no white man's individualism', describing the economic and social organisation of the reserve. Even as indigenous culture and knowledge is celebrated, it is co-opted into the European intellectual tradition of rationalism, along with one of its many political ramifications (here, Marxism). Colombian priest and liberation theologian Gustavo Pérez, whose book denouncing the Planas killings inspired Silva and Rodríguez to make the film, makes the same point in another *Cine cubano* article (Pérez Ramírez 1971). For Pérez, the non-existence of the notion of private property among the Guahibos defined their society as 'a kind of primitive socialism' (Pérez Ramirez ed. 1971: 61).

Yet even though the postproduction phase of *Planas* erects an aural hierarchy that privileges the expositional, authoritative male voice-over, indigenous voices are not *entirely* subsumed to a Marxist master-narrative. The exoticist overtones of the

repeatedly-evoked 'new Indian' are offset by the complex of other voices that permeate the film's structure, raising the film from univocal political pamphleteering to sociological, political and cultural analysis.[18] One man's angry and eloquent testimony, for instance, both attests to the inhuman mistreatment of indigenous peoples, *and* rejects those national political factions that claim to defend indigenous groups' rights:

> The cooperative was good because it provided a service. So to stop the cooperative they were arguing with [Rafael] Jaramillo [Ulloa], they said he was a communist. He did everything he could to help the indigenous people, so they said to him, 'you're a communist'. He said 'no, we're not', we were helping ourselves out, the cooperative was what helped us out with our communal property...We sell to the cooperative because that way they pay us better.[19]

The man's eloquence, and his rejection of the 'communist' label, works against an unequivocal, one-dimensional interpretation of the film. He knows and understands the socialist doctrine the filmmakers subscribe to, but he rejects it. The indigenous voices serve not simply to shore up the argument of the dominant narrative of the unseen narrator; they contest it, at times they eclipse it. The film 'interprets' the protagonists, but they do not hesitate to talk back.

Realism and reconstruction

Of course, while *Planas*' soundtrack is given over to the indigenous witnesses, the (organisational, imagistic) control of the filmmakers does not evaporate. Yet it was the moves made away from a hierarchical methodological relationship that both Silva/Rodríguez and the Ukamau Group developed with their protagonists that, in their eyes, lent their films a scientific authenticity and truthfulness unknown to either

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[18] In this respect *Planas* draws simultaneously on the strategies of 'expository' and 'interactive' modes of documentary, as defined by Nichols (1991: 32-75). The haste and political urgency with which the film was produced, it would appear, meant that the subtle processes of interaction described here did not have sufficient didactic force for *Planas*' concrete goals to be achieved.

[19] For the origins of the cooperative, see Pérez Ramírez (1971: 186-191). Jaramillo Ulloa, who had previously worked in the region as a government malaria inspector and police officer, seems to have acted out of humanist sentiment rather than socialist ideology.

commercial or conventional ethnographic cinema. Jorge Silva, referring to the few reconstructed segments of *Planas*, emphasised that 'what was filmed was all corroborated by the community, and by scientific analysis of the actual facts...We wanted to produce a responsible work that was sufficiently documented and with proof' (Caicedo and Ospina 1974: 41). Likewise, during the opening credits of *Coraje* two subtitles inform us that 'the events of this film are true, their reconstruction is based on testimonies and documents...The main protagonists are the actual witnesses who are acting out [interpretan] their own stories'. Since these filmmakers, as well as many others of their generation in Latin America, set their stall so firmly on the 'realities' they portrayed, on their work's capacity to directly reference or stand for what was 'really happening', it seems pertinent here to consider the implications of such inflated claims to realism.

After *Yawar Mallku* Sanjinés chose to discard its fictional strategies, for they lent the film 'a dangerous degree of inauthenticity [inverosimilitud]' (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 21). The medium of fiction film was, perhaps, too close for comfort to the mystifications and hidden ideological agendas of which radical filmmakers and critics the world over accused the 'classical realism' dominant in mainstream and some art-house cinema. An influential 1974 article by Colin MacCabe, drawing on both Lacanian and Marxist theory, traced the narrative structure of fiction cinema back to the nineteenth-century realist novel (as had many others before), arguing that the notion of the real on which it depends exists within a closed narrative system, bearing only an illusory relationship to the empirical world (MacCabe 1974). While a novel may contain conflicting voices and discourses (the words or thoughts, for instance, of different characters, written in inverted commas), they are subordinated in the hierarchy of discourses to the 'metalanguage', the words of an unseen narrator. By setting itself against the subjective and worldly utterances of the characters, the

metalanguage both claims a privileged access to the 'truth' (which it shares with the reader) and presents itself as 'unwritten..., denying its own status as writing...[or] articulation' (MacCabe 1974: 8-9). Unlike the minor discourses, the metalanguage suppresses the inevitable separation, through time and space, of the 'original moment' (what happened) from its expression in words (what was said). Likewise in classical realist cinema, 'the camera shows us what happens – it tells the truth against which we can measure the discourses' (MacCabe 1974: 10): while we may be party to other points of view, we can always slip back into a 'neutral', secure viewing position. That truth, the final reality, 'exists' in the objective world and, since we are caught within the boundaries of the narrative, it is only via the metalanguage that we can gain access to it. 'The relationship between the reading subject and the real', therefore, 'is placed as one of pure specularity' (MacCabe 1974: 12). Since the real simply 'is', we have no stake in it. Echoing the concern over the mystifications of commercial cinema voiced by Solanas and Getino and cited above, the viewer is reduced to a passive position, at once involved with and entirely separated from the action.

With regard to the mode of spectatorship it induces, John Hess compares *Yawar Mallku* favourably to the Italian neo-realist movies *Rome, Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945) and *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio de Sica, 1948). Hess points out that the Italian films elide both historical depth and the present possibility of political change in favour of a vague spiritualist fatalism. By skirting around the characters', filmmakers' and viewers' own complicity with Italian fascism, as well as contemporary political movements that might solve the characters' problems, they depict 'reality' (that of poverty) as mysteriously immutable and existing outside time. *Yawar Mallku*, by contrast, 'perform[s] a precise analysis of the world of these indigenous peasants' (Hess 1993: 113) and concludes with Sixto's active decision to return to his indigenous community to fight: a mode, Hess implies, that many Bolivians might do well to follow.

Yet in the light of both MacCabe's propositions and Sanjinés' own change of tack, this might be too hasty a defence of a film like *Yawar Mallku*'s potential to inspire social change.

In a scene that has often been likened to an analogous sequence from *Bicycle Thieves*, Sixto walks through the city marketplace and considers stealing a rich woman's purse, so he can buy blood in order to save his brother Ignacio's life. The interplay of hand-held tracking shots and grotesque, distorted close-ups wills us to see the action from Sixto's point of view: he gazes longingly at the handbag; he looks around him at the bustle of everyday commerce; he passes over the mistrustful countenances of the (indigenous, *cholo* and white) passers-by. The scene, to be sure, gives us access to these characters' perspectives (they think, in inverted commas, ' "how suspicious this Indian looks, what does he want from me?" '); we can empathise too with Sixto's own point of view (' "do I steal and risk capture and moral guilt, or do I remain honest, and risk my brother's death?" ' – again, in inverted commas). Yet only through the metalanguage – the filmmaker's conspiratorial wink to his spectator conveyed through the expressionistic cinematography and editing discussed in Chapter 2 – do we achieve a full 'understanding' of the situation. 'Ironically the marketplace, space of human interaction, is where Sixto feels loneliest', we are shown (without inverted commas); 'these tradesmen, tourists and bourgeois people care nothing for him. For they who have forgotten the millennial wisdom of their Quechua or Aymara origins, indigenous culture is a petty commodity, an adornment, a pretty mask to be sold. Now,' the film text seems to be telling us, 'their indifference means death for the brave Ignacio, defender of his people'.

Following MacCabe's argument, the camera seeks in this scene to act as a neutral vessel, a metalanguage that, as in both classical realism and neorealism, 'guarantees the position of the subject exactly outside any articulation' (MacCabe 1974:

18).[20] Admittedly the film's final triumphal scene does coax the Bolivian viewer into a real commitment with the Indian struggle, and the concrete results of its exhibition bears testament to its real impact: by Sanjinés' account, the reception of *Yawar Mallku* was a catalyst for President Torres' expulsion of the Peace Corps in May 1971.[21] Yet rather than becoming bogged down here with any racist conclusions about the Bolivian Indians' inability to distinguish fact from fiction, I prefer to use this analysis of *Yawar Mallku*'s neo-realist strategies to try to account for its shortcomings, and to go some way to explaining the Ukamau Group's transition away from straightforward fiction towards the hybrid expressionist-documentary style they developed in subsequent films.

Yawar Mallku seems to fit to a degree into MacCabe's schema, which suggests that a failure to challenge the linguistic terms of the metalanguage entails an inability to articulate the contradictions inherent in the realities it depicts. That is to say, in its rush to present reality as rounded and complete, the metalanguage can admit neither the instability of its own status-as-writing (the fact that what is seen on screen is not an exact replica, beyond temporal and spatial separation, of an empirical reality), nor the limitations and partiality of its own argument (the fact that the indigenous of Bolivia, as Elena Feder (1999) reminds us, are neither universally virtuous victims of an oppressive white/*mestizo* majority, nor wholly separable from that minority). MacCabe might have described *Yawar Mallku* as an *indigenista* inflection of *ouvrieriste* progressive realism, 'tend[ing] to see the working class, outside any dialectical movement, as the simple possessors of the truth' (MacCabe 1974: 16). In their attempts to overcome this, the Ukamau Group's subsequent films seek a more radical and self-conscious form linked

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[20] I therefore concur with Hart (2003: 298) that in *Yawar Mallku* 'the camera took on the role of a neutral, supposedly ideology-free eye creating an untrammelled vision of the subaltern'.

[21] Whether the Peace Corps' expulsion was a direct result of the film is unclear, and beyond the bounds of this study. It is perhaps more useful to consider both the expulsion and popular enthusiasm for *Yawar Mallku* itself in the context of a generalised atmosphere of anti-US sentiment in Bolivia at the time, alongside strong pressure from the left upon Torres' weak government to implement anti-imperialist policies. See Dunkerley (1984: 185-186). The complexities of the situation, of course, did not prevent both Sanjinés and *Cine cubano* from claiming the Peace Corps' banishment as one more feather in the caps of the Ukamau Group and the New Latin American Cinema. See the dossier of documents on *Yawar Mallku* reprinted in *Cine cubano* 58-59 (1969), pp.78-87.

firmly to content, and delving deeply into the complex causes, rather than simply the effects, of the working and Indian classes' predicament.

As in *Planas*, *Coraje*'s narrative is built out of the 'realities' of its protagonists' testimonies; unlike *Yawar Mallku*, it goes some way to probing the internal contradictions of that reality. The bulk of *Coraje* is a series of reconstructed scenes of the days running up to the 'Noche de San Juan' massacre of 1967 when the Barrientos government, fearful of the resistance it was meeting on two fronts from Che Guevara's guerrilla force in the East and the radicalised miners in Siglo Veinte, allowed the army to open fire on the unarmed townspeople, resulting in at least 87 deaths (Dunkerley 1984: 149). Perhaps to a greater extent than *Planas*, save the opening and closing non-diegetic diatribes, the narrative emerges from the protagonists. Sometimes they are interviewed with direct sound in participatory documentary style (although the filmmakers' voices are conspicuously elided); sometimes they 'speak' through the reconstruction sequences. Early in the film Felicidad Coca, the wife of a unionist murdered on the Noche de San Juan, speaks to the camera of the workers' organisation and mobilisation in the days leading up to the massacre. We slip into a reconstruction: a group of women march into the offices of COMIBOL (the state-owned Bolivian Mining Corporation) demanding that the company shop be stocked with the necessary food. The camera follows them as they leave the shop to address their husbands and brothers, vociferously accusing them of being ineffectual in the struggle. Anticipating the integral sequence shot used in the Ukamau Group's later movies, a hand-held camera roams around the back of the crowd, forming separate circles to divide the opposing male and female groups.

At its climax, *Coraje* turns to a somewhat gender-biased analysis that privileges the macho bravery of the male miners in their heroic struggle. Yet by shedding much light on the role of women in the miners' political cause, it also shows that the question

of solidarity is not, even within one small community, so simple.[22] Later on a policeman, who was on duty on the night of the massacre, tells how he fired into the air rather than shooting at his '*compañeros*' from the town. Just as the miners are not universally heroic and virtuous, neither are the authorities unequivocally bad. On a textual level, for Ana López *Coraje*'s formal structure places it within a New Latin American Cinema tradition of 'hypertextuality' that, by converting documentary into fiction, 'transform[s] the conventions and effects of the cinema through the formal contrast and synthesis of "opposite" modes of cinematic representation'. It therefore inserts itself into a new type of relationship with reality that both transcends the indexical pretensions of documentary, and goes beyond the pure *inter*textuality of fiction by rooting it in society and the force of history (López 1990: 425-428). For López, *Coraje* thus performs a Brechtian revision of the viewer-text relationship, enabling the spectator both to operate within the film's discourse *and* to converse with it, without being entirely enclosed within its limits.

Yet another reading of *Coraje* could suggest that, even as it makes considerable progress in analysing contradiction and encouraging detached, dialectical debate, its reconstruction sequences fall back into an omniscient metalanguage, presenting the camera as the incontrovertible herald of truth. The film's climactic scene, a prolonged reconstruction of the Siglo Veinte massacre itself, alternates between a rough, hand-held reportage style, and dramatic close-ups of soldiers shooting, somewhat reminiscent of mainstream action movies. It is as if the camera wishes to locate itself at once within and above the action: exposing itself to the (fabricated) danger of the street battle, but also cutting every now and then to an omniscient establishing-shot of the military

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[22] However, Wigozki (1999) criticises Sanjinés' film for playing down the crucial role of the housewives' political activism in the mining struggles, and subsuming specifically female voices into a class discourse. On the other hand she praises the transcribed testimonies of the female mining activist Domitila Barrios de Chungara for allowing the free passage of the women's private/domestic sphere (their role as housewives) into the public arena. For Barrios de Chungara's testimony, see Barrios de Chungara with Viezzer (1978).

watchtower, or long-shots showing the soldiers moving into position. In a later shot the all-seeing camera pans slowly and spectacularly across a handful of miners fleeing over a mountainside almost as specks in the distance, before a military aeroplane guns them down. The reconstruction, created through the technical virtuosity of Sanjinés and his crew, is placed on the same ontological level of 'authenticity' as the documentary footage of the interviews with the miners and miners' widows. Again, Sanjinés insists on the reality of both the documentary and the fictionalised sequences:

> Many scenes were set out in the very place that they actually happened, by speaking with the real protagonists about the historical events we were reconstructing; after all they had more right than us to decide how things should be reconstructed. At the same time, they acted the scenes out with a strength of conviction that a professional actor can rarely achieve...The dialogues were opened up to their precise memories of the events or, as happened in the filming of *The Principal Enemy*, to the expression of their own ideas. The peasants used the scene to liberate their voice that had been repressed by the forces of oppression, and they said to the [actor playing the] judge or the boss in the film what they actually wanted to say to those people in real life. Here cinema and reality became confused, they were the same thing (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 63).

For Sanjinés, the 'horizontal' relationship he developed with his protagonists lent even the reconstructed sequences a 'documentary irrefutability':

> The filming of the first massacre in *The Courage of the People* was uninterrupted from the moment the crowd came down from the hills to the point on the plain where they were reached by the bullets. The cameramen came in to film a real massacre. And a good many scenes had be revealed right there, very quickly, so as not to lose them, as they could never be repeated, as in real life, because the psychological atmosphere had been unleashed and it would only happen once...Those images had not been thought up by a scriptwriter, they had not been staged or made up by a director...They were images made up (or rather, remembered) by the people. They were situations created right there by the people who were reliving them in the turbulence of action, against the clamour of the explosions (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 23-24).

Not only is a direct relationship evoked between event and film; not only is the camera 'recording' an authentic replica of a past event, but the re-creation itself is seen to be as

'real' as the originary moment. Any artistic input from the filmmakers glides into invisibility: 'we, the crew, became instruments of the people who expressed themselves and struggled through our medium!' (Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau 1979: 63). The medium, like MacCabe's metalanguage, and arguably unlike the formal experimentation of some of the Ukamau Group's subsequent films, is unspoken, neutral: the *mise-en-scène* is entirely unselfconscious, it does not represent, it simply 'is'.

The solution proposed by certain strands of radical French and British post-1968 criticism (including MacCabe) to the blind alley of progressive realism was what Sylvia Harvey has termed 'political modernism', defined by David Rodowick as 'the possibility of a radical, political text...conditioned by the necessity of...strategies emphasizing the material nature of language or cinematic presentation' (1988: 12). The resolution of Sanjinés, his more immediate political agenda calling for a more realist and materially effective agenda, seems to be the diametric opposite: since the radical political text is created by the people and through the people, with the filmmakers standing almost as empty vessels, the language springs spontaneously from their selves, it inhabits their natural 'performance' of their past.

To act as a counterpoint to Sanjinés' own thoughts on *Coraje*'s effectiveness, one Bolivian journalist's viewing experience (most likely during a Sanjinés retrospective at the Cinemateca in La Paz in 1979 following the fall of the *banzerato*) seems to signal one drawback of the film's linguistic strategy:

> The people who watch their courage, the courage of the people, laugh. The stammering hunger that is killing this woman makes the people who watch her courage laugh...This tragedy fails to create an identity between that side of the screen and this, the side of the seats. The people see Redskins die at least once a week, so it's nothing strange that they quickly forget – especially when the film is so beautiful – that what they're watching is not fiction, but a cinema faithful to the facts (Von Vacano n.d).

For this audience at least, there is clearly no identity between the represented or recreated event and any 'original moment'. Cinematic narrative form is inevitably intertextual: here, the viewers' experience of the massacre has apparently been filtered through the escapist medium of the Hollywood Western, throwing up a whole series of questions about the national, ethnic and class affiliations adopted by Bolivian viewers of *Coraje*. As Von Vacano points out, 'nobody wants to be a Redskin, not even the Redskins themselves'.

Revolutionising *cinéma vérité*

Such titters seem unlikely from any audience of *Planas*, although the committed intellectuals Silva and Rodríguez shared much ideological and aesthetic ground with Sanjinés. While MacCabe criticised the films of Costa-Gavras or Rossellini for a delusional 'progressive realism', Silva and Rodríguez saw their work as firmly rooted in an undeniable empirical truth (the oppression to which the characters testify) and an unavoidable political truth (the necessity of class struggle) which, through their films, they would reveal to the viewer. Not unlike Sanjinés' observations on *Coraje*, although in a rather more circumspect manner, Marta Rodríguez describes the indigenous community's reactions to the reconstructions in *Planas*:

> We went to Planas some months after the murders. So together with the indigenous people we gradually gathered data, they talked us through [indicaban] the scenes that are now filmed. 'They tied us to a post like this, they kept us for so many hours, they burnt us with cigarettes.' They told us, 'The troops arrived and we had to run off with our children into the jungle.' Somebody told us the popular audience had not reacted well to these reconstructions, especially in *Planas*. They even asked us, 'but why did you not tell them the troops were coming?' Or 'why did you let them torture them like that?' (Caicedo and Ospina 1974: 40).

Rather than celebrating the equivalence that their protagonists perceived between the original trauma and its reconstruction, for Silva and Rodríguez it seems to pose a methodological problem, making the images they filmed potentially misleading or

*in*authentic for their protagonists. For all their assurances of verisimilitude, it seems clear from their films that they sought something more than a homologous relationship between celluloid images and an empirical, objective reality. Rodríguez has frequently described her working methodology as participatory observation. Unlike observational documentary, participatory observation rejects the self-effacing conceit of a third-person perspective, entering instead into a productive and declared relationship with the subject, described by Jean Rouch as 'improvising a ballet in which the camera itself becomes just as much alive as the people it is filming' (2003: 89). Rouch's *cinéma vérité* (undoubtedly influential for Rodríguez) does not go to the poststructuralist lengths of renouncing the possibility of a material reality, holding that the camera-observer's mission is to penetrate 'the very heart of knowledge' (Rouch 2003: 96). Yet knowledge is not pre-existing and waiting to be discovered, as it is for the camera of observational documentary that seeks to fade into invisibility so as to achieve 'the power to witness the totality of an event': 'a legtimization, in the name of art or science, of the voyeur's peephole' (MacDougall 2003: 120). It emerges instead from the creative process at the intersection of filmmaker and subject.

There would seem here to be a parallel with the observations Sanjinés made about the visceral 'reality' created by the actors of *Coraje*, but there is a crucial difference. Where Sanjinés attested to the 'reality' of the scene being played out by his protagonists which his cameras merely (and invisibly) recorded, Silva and Rodríguez's aesthetic at least implicitly posits the camera as a material element in the creative process. Their Marxist political commitment, it must be admitted, led them away from the humanism of *cinéma vérité* and towards a Sanjinés-style attempt to reduce (if not entirely eliminate) the subjective and interpretive properties of the camera.[23] But a study of their films, I believe, can indicate that the ontological basis of their work owes much

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[23] See 'Colombia: la memoria popular' (1977: 20) for the filmmakers' discussion of Sanjinés and subjectivity.

to cinéma-vérité's implication that meaning is processual and constantly deferred. To an extent this de-mystifies the filmmaking process, arguably implying a more concrete and genuine democratisation than Sanjinés' claims that film is a simple vehicle for the people.

MacDougall explains that in observational documentary, 'the image...continually asserts the presence of the concrete world within the framework of a communicative system that imposes meaning'. The image, rather like in progressive realism, becomes both evidence of a concrete and undeniable reality, and a denial of all other possible images: 'in that double nature is the magic that can so easily dazzle us' (2003: 123-124). But *Planas* never wholeheartedly assures us that there is a simple and objective reality that can be merely transferred onto celluloid through Silva and Rodríguez's privileged, magical power as filmmakers. The overriding political message of their films, of course, is never in question. But parallel to this runs what one might call a participatory poeticism – as in the First Communion scene in *Chircales* – that at moments drives meaning away from its cave, calling instead for repeated and renewable interpretation.

For Rouch the commentary of ethnographic documentary should be unashamedly subjective, for otherwise it 'obscures and masks [the images] until the words substitute themselves for the pictures'. He argued against direct, synchronous sound, since 'far from translating, transmitting, and approximating reality, this sort of discourse betrayed the subject and drifted away from reality [...] Many recent films of the direct cinema type are thus spoiled by incredible regard for the chatting of the people filmed, as if oral testimony were more sacred than the visual sort' (2003: 91-94). Involved, contrapuntal sound, on the other hand, had great documentary value. As noted above, Rodríguez and Silva's films betray a greater ontological faith than Rouch in the indexical quality of cinema, and they *do* use direct sound to convey the protagonists'

testimonies. For much of *Planas* image and sound, in realist tradition, bear a direct relationship to one another – take, for instance, the example cited earlier of the Guahibos' scientific treatment of manioc.

Yet at times Silva's camera drifts off to a different level of contemplation, asking tentatively whether meaning can so simply be pinned down. An adolescent boy talks to the camera, delivering a harrowing testimony of violence and humiliation:

> [The soldiers] killed Saúl right in front of me, and they put a bullet through his head. Then they just laughed, they said he wasn't going any further than the jungle. And the old woman, she saw he was dead, saying 'what's this?' And the old woman, she was the mother of the dead man, Raúl Flores. And one of the army men grabbed her by the arm, and he said to the mother, 'look, your son's dead.' Well of course the old woman started crying. And they said to her, she was crying for her son, 'look, you're not worth shit, if you're going to carry on crying we'll put a bullet through you too, so you shut up.' And so…her son was such a hardworking bloke, he was a great worker, and they wanted to kill her, they said to her, 'we can kill you, we don't care. Go on crying and you'll see, we'll put a bullet through you.' And in the end the old woman, well, she had to obey and she stopped crying.

For the duration of the speech, the camera opts for neither a sensationalist reconstruction of the events nor a simple prolonged close-up of the speaker to merely confirm the presence and 'reality' of his words. Instead there is a cut away from the studio of the interview, to a close-up of a blind, wrinkled, sad but defiantly dignified old woman – presumably the mother in the testimony, although we are never told so. The hand-held camera pans slowly across three generations of people stood as if posing for a family photograph, stopping to pick out details (the old woman's hand resting on her stick) and expressions (an angry man, an indignant younger woman, an uncomprehending child; though their looks are natural and subtle, not staged). A cut takes us to a larger close-up of the old woman's face; the camera roves inquisitively around her body. The moving image rests once again on her face, before fading seamlessly into a sharper, high-contrast but slightly blurred still photograph of her in exactly the same position: the photograph, surely, for which she was posing. The hand-

held film camera continues to rove around the still photograph, picking out the woman's gnarled neck, tracks back and tilts up slightly before zooming back into close-up. We cut to another still of the younger woman from the family photograph, zooming into a extreme-close-up of her eyes before zooming back to the original position. A cut takes us back to the moving image of the young girl's eyes, which stare right into the camera before looking down, embarrassed perhaps. We cut now to a moving-image close-up of the younger woman, looking sadly into the lens in a near-identical pose to the still photograph.

The scene narrated by the boy seems too dreadful to contemplate; the camera, unable to match his words, constantly defers them. Instead of depicting the woman's humiliation, the image attests to her strength and ability to fight this cruelty; the camera's circular motion around her family emphasises its togetherness, the continuity from one generation to the next, perhaps the progressive wisdom of age. At the same time the smooth (but not seamless) transitions between still and moving images throw us out of any reverie and remind us that what we are watching is the material result of a chemical and artistic process, not fixed and inherently true. This approach, crucial also to Rouch's work, softly implies that meaning does not derive solely from the integral text presented directly by filmmaker to viewer; there are, the camera hints, deeper levels of reality that a filmed representation can only begin to probe. Image and sound are not precisely contrapuntal in relation to one another; but they do bring into play their materiality, showing that the images Silva has captured exist only among infinite possibilities, and each one is infinitely interpretable. As Martínez Pardo remarks in relation to *Campesinos*, the visual space is scrutinised to seek details invisible to verbal language. 'We cannot say that the work belongs to the peasants, but neither does it belong to the filmmakers. It is the product of a process unleashed by the two groups' confrontation' (1979: 373). There is no populist pretence that the images belong solely

to those portrayed; despite the certainties proclaimed by the voice-over commentary, if there is a 'reality' here the camera also has a stake in its creation. There is something Bazinian about *Planas*' realism: the real cannot be simply and directly portrayed through the lens; nevertheless there is, somewhere, a reality to be discovered (and here, denounced) by a skilfully-managed, enlightening camera.

Planas' moments of enquiring openness provide its durability: watching it in the twenty-first century, the Marxist master-narrative (the film's original motivation) seems naïve; but its determined protagonists – the forebears of today's powerful and organised Colombian indigenous movement – live on through the text, appropriating it from its 'authors'. As Michael Chanan argues, the result of the European structuralist criticism that emerged from the type of argument put forward by MacCabe is that 'an image…is said to yield meaning only because it stands in a certain relationship to the other images through which it is – so to speak – refracted' (Chanan 1997b: 215). The aesthetic corollary of this way of thinking, for Chanan, was often 'a superficial and rigid formalism', hence his belief that to translate such thinking to Latin American reality is, not to put too fine a point on it, a waste of time.

In terms of the European avant-garde this may or may not be so, and that issue lies well beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet I believe that by analysing these films with an awareness of those theories a productive reading of them can be achieved. As I will argue in the next chapter, what we might call Silva and Rodríguez's 'didactic poetry' (and I stress that this may well lie beyond the filmmakers' original intentions) carves a path between an introspective deferral of meaning and an overtly realist belief in the intrinsic 'truth' or 'authenticity' of the filmmaker-audience encounter. Such a re-reading, admittedly, is certainly a symptom of the benefit of hindsight; a different (although not always more favourable) set of political situations; and the occasion, with

the luxury of time to reflect on and re-think the issues beyond the heat of the moment, to stray beyond whatever the original intentions of the filmmakers might have been. But what I have tried to show here is that the aesthetic emerging in *Planas* is one that, while never renouncing its own claim for an ideological stake in the new reality it seeks to forge (in the manner, perhaps, of Vertov's *Man With a Movie Camera*), ultimately concedes to the Gramscian 'multi-faceted nature of consciousness', the impossibility of 'a pre-given unified ideological subject' (Hall 1996a: 433). For all the expository value of the political film coming from outside the diegesis, from within there are always further levels of analysis and understanding; there are still others that are beyond rationalising, beyond capturing through any type of language. Chapter 4 will probe further into this debate, turning to the appropriation of and/or interplay of indigenous mythologies and narrative form with both conventional and innovative cinematic structures.

Chapter Four

In Search of Indigenous Narrative Form

As the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental worked increasingly with indigenous communities in the production and exhibition of their films, they realised that the supposedly universal grammatical logic of their films originated in a Western philosophical tradition. This chapter discusses the epistemological underpinnings of the experiments in narrative form undergone by filmmakers committed to indigenous cultural and political struggles but trained in Western aesthetics and techniques.[1] In these films they sought to forge out of celluloid 'spaces for the masses to reflect upon themselves' while 'tr[ying] to approach Andean cultural structures' (Sanjinés 1989: 66), that would 'make the indigenous voice heard so that they can recognise themselves in the film, so they can hear themselves. Not the voice of the other, the imposing, authoritative voice that's telling them the way things are'. [2]

By radically overhauling film form, Jorge Sanjinés and Marta Rodríguez/Jorge Silva wanted the narrative and philosophical structures of the indigenous societies they documented to partially cannibalise their own, inevitably external perspectives. Yet as cultural mediators between indigenous and non-indigenous epistemological and political regimes, they did not simply try to 'go native'. I will argue in this chapter that *La nación* and *Nuestra voz* find their subversive force by interweaving their understandings of Andean cosmologies with borrowed or politically revitalised readings of such theoretical and practical proposals as those of Bertolt Brecht, Andre Bazin, Jean Rouch and 1970s European apparatus theory. That is not to say that I read these films as

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[1] I will focus here on The Ukamau Group's *Yawar Mallku* (Bolivia, 1969) and *La nación clandestina* (1989); and the Silva and Rodríguez's *Campesinos* (Colombia, 1975) and *Nuestra voz de tierra, memoria y futuro* (Colombia, 1982).

[2] Marta Rodríguez, quoted in León Hoyos (1982: 32).

exotic calques of tried and tested European ideas transferred to a new reality. I argue rather that, much as they looked for *political* accommodations between European-derived Marxism and specific Andean struggles (as I examined in Chapter 3), these films (to varying degrees) seek out analogous *cultural* concepts and agendas between Andean philosophies and radical European film praxis and criticism in order to undermine the rigid signifying practices of Western narratives.

The Ukamau Group and the Silva/Rodríguez team were by no means their countries' first urban-based filmmakers to delve into the rural sphere. In Colombia Gabriela Samper was already an established anthropological documentarist by the time *Chircales* came into the public eye, with much-acclaimed documentary shorts such as *El páramo de Cumanday* (1965) and *El hombre de la sal* (1968). Closely linked to cineastes such as Carlos Álvarez and Jorge Silva, Samper has been placed by some within similar traditions of Colombian 'Third' or 'militant' cinema as her contemporaries (Álvarez 1978; Campo 1998), although by her own account her films aimed not so much to directly intervene in social change, but rather more nostalgically, 'to capture our country's traditions and customs that are slowly disappearing' (quoted in Bobb 1969). *El hombre de la sal*, for instance, tells the story of Marcos Olaya, a salt refiner on the Bogotá savannah who continued to use an ancestral Chibcha method for many years after the process was industrialised and mechanised, as an affirmation of his identity as an autonomous artisan in the face of faceless modernisation: 'the alienation of our age' (Samper, quoted in Zea de Uribe ed. 1981). In a letter to the Guggenheim Foundation requesting postproduction funding for *El hombre*, Samper characterised her social commitment to folklore as a contribution to modernity, since only by comprehending its cultural ancestry could a people achieve the 'sense of nationality' that would lead to development.[3]

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[3] Letter dated 25 November 1969, reprinted in Zea de Uribe ed. 1981.

A similar ideological vein of national self-knowledge ran through the work of Jorge Ruiz, often described as the pioneer of Bolivian documentary cinema. His seminal film *Vuelve Sebastiana* (1953) documents an episode in the life of Sebastiana, a Chipaya girl from a remote, primitive *altiplano* community. It dramatises the cultural conflict that occurs when Sebastiana wanders off one day and encounters an Aymara boy, a member of a strange new civilisation: the sights and smells of this prosperous land is unknown in her humble village. The cultural encounter and resulting friendship between two individuals hailing from the colonising Aymara power and the disappearing Chipaya race is a subtle metaphor for Bolivia's post-1952 revolutionary project which sought to build a new society out of the coming-together of people from across the racial spectrum; but the film's conclusion, with Sebastiana returning to her community following the death of her wise grandfather, also preaches the importance of retaining an awareness of historical cultural difference. Even so, Ruiz's decision to focus on the (apparently) poverty-stricken and moribund Chipayas tends to bolster the claims of postrevolutionary national *indigenismo*, which taught – not unlike Gabriela Samper's Colombian ethnographic film – that 'no modernity or future is possible for Bolivia unless it recognises and incorporates the wisdom and communal life of its indigenous cultures' (Córdova 2002: 187).[4]

In a sense Samper's and Ruiz's pioneering ethnographic films laid the groundwork for a generation of Colombian and Bolivian cineastes, who followed the examples of their forebears in digging deep below the surface of their respective countries' sense of national self. But whereas their films often idealised their subjects' rural purity, the indigenous protagonists of *La nación* and *Nuestra voz* are seen

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[4] Córdova (2002: 182-188) argues that *Vuelve Sebastiana* shores up the postrevolutionary appropriation of the indigenous image through the hierarchy of voices established on the soundtrack, which consists mainly of a male narrator telling Sebastiana's story back to her in second person singular: 'the revolutionary government addressed the "Indian problem" in the same way the narrator does in *Vuelve Sebastiana*: by translating into Spanish the indigenous' discourses, by westernising their needs' (Córdova 2002: 187).

interacting with the national and international political, economic and philosophical spheres, while regaining or retaining their ethnic separateness as a cultural and political resource. To say that films as cultural products, or filmmakers as intellectuals, stand at the interstices of two separate systems of belief and representation (indigenous and non-indigenous, or archaic and modern) risks totalising and generalising what are complex and interdependent sets of cultural identities, converting them into fixed, timeless mythologies. The films discussed in this chapter, I would argue, dramatise the encounter between the indigenous and the non-indigenous in a way that highlights the cultural, social and political flux between them, rather than assigning them to sealed categories.

The fiction feature *La nación* dramatises the Bolivian nation as a traumatic ethnic encounter, charting the journey of Sebastián Maisman (Reynaldo Yujra) from La Paz back to his *ayllu* Willkani. Having forsaken his Aymara roots to live in the city (like Sixto in *Yawar Mallku*, he angrily declares 'I'm not an Indian!'), and having been discovered embezzling aid money for Willkani from a US organisation in his time as community leader, Sebastián returns to his *ayllu* to dance the Jacha Tata Danzante, a long-forgotten sacrificial ritual performed in times of crisis by an *ayllu* member who dances until dying of exhaustion. The feature-length documentary *Nuestra voz* narrates the emergence and struggles of the CRIC (Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca), a movement founded in 1971 out of an alliance between indigenous *cabildos* in the Cauca region of south-western Colombia. On a political level, *Nuestra voz* narrates the concrete clashes between the CRIC's indigenous members and the political, economic and military machinery of national elites and international capital. At the same time it also enacts the multifaceted myth of La Huecada which, transmitted orally in a polyphony of forms throughout the Cauca region, serves as a vehicle through which the Coconuco, Guambiano and Paez Indians 'rationalise' their violent relations with feudal landlords, mine-owners and international capitalists. In both films, indigenous and non-

indigenous imaginaries are complicit in one another's genesis and formation, be it through violent confrontation, negotiation or disavowal.

Rowe and Schelling's account of syncretic popular Christianity in the Andean region rejects a simplistic model of acculturation and displacement of indigenous culture. They conceive rather of a long 'struggle for cultural control', picking out moments at which 'it is "their" culture which is processing "ours"', rather than vice versa: Christianity's Last Judgement, for instance, is reconverted into the existing concept of *pachakuti*, the cosmic cataclysm that in Andean thought inaugurates a new epoch (1991: 53-57). As Estermann points out, unlike a Western utopia (or the conquistadores' conception of El Dorado) that is projected into an unknown, ideal future, or the linear, post-Enlightenment European notion of revolution that implies the progressive, 'necessary innovation of a new order', *pachakuti* is a 'retrospective utopia', universally and definitively restoring a previous epoch. [5] Andean time simultaneously advances towards the future in 500-year spirals and cyclically repeats past eras, with every movement into the future having an eye on a past utopia. On the other hand when processed back into a Western epistemic framework, *pachakuti* is often glossed simply as 'Andean utopia' or 'revolution' (Estermann 1998: 179-189).[6]

The films under study here confront Andean *pachakuti* with European notions of revolution, investigating the implications for political and cultural alliances between the two. This encounter, filtered through European ideas about revolutionary aesthetics, also has implications for the formal structure of film. Echoing Noël Burch, Sanjinés' theoretical reflections on cinema have underlined the cultural specificity of the temporality which cinema, by reassembling fragments of time and space, re-creates. For Burch (1973: 3-16, and ch. 5 below), Western mainstream narrative cinema relies on a

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[5] Raymond Williams (1998: 270-274) points out that the modern sense of 'revolution' only became widespread in Europe following the French Revolution. Previously it had carried the connotation of a temporary change of the state of affairs, implying an eventual 'restoration of lawful authority'.

[6] Estermann notes, however, that while the five epochs of *pachakuti* were present in pre-Columbian Andean thought, their 500-year duration itself would appear to derive from Judaeo-Christian symbolism.

chemical process that performs a mental and physiological deception upon the viewer, an illusion of spatio-temporal integrity created by fragmenting and re-organising fragments of filmed reality. For Sanjinés, the Western narrative tradition, based on dramatic tension and an inexorable movement towards a climactic dénouement, is rooted in a temporal philosophy

> which begins with a genesis and is projected towards the infinite until meeting with the final judgement. It is a world-view in which what has passed can never return, and for that reason [the West] is a culture that disdains the past, casting it as outdated, obsolete, only fit for adorning museums. (Sanjinés 1990)

How, then, might this medium 'approach' or 'express' societies whose conceptions of time and history radically differ from the Western notion of one-directional linear progression, without disciplining its subjects into its own epistemic regime?

Marta Rodríguez, trained as an anthropologist, was well aware of the methodological and textual pitfalls of working with culturally distinct, or 'other', communities. Rodríguez and Silva declared their films would overcome these problems by 'scientific' as well as aesthetic means (see ch. 2 and 3 above). Silva's belief in cinema's ability to 'reveal' reality betrays the documentarian's age-old faith in cinema's property as record of a lived reality:

> Through a rigorous analysis of reality, what we are trying to achieve is a way of shaping our type of scientific research to the film, to a cinema that communicates with the viewer not on an emotional level, but one that creates a rational link, a critical link. (Barreiro Ortiz 1982: 54).

Silva and Rodríguez's films, however, differed from the scientific observational ethnographic documentary tradition, in which the investigating subject gained 'knowledge' of the scrutinised object through an analytical separation from it, conveying its findings in a 'neutral' idiom. In the same interview Silva intimates that it is the ambiguous, open-ended, poetic potential of *participative* observational documentary that can produce an enlightened critical consciousness that clinical, rigid

scientific language cannot access, thereby enabling the protagonists to express themselves through the surface of the text. The filmmakers' rejection of an ideologically 'empty' scientific discourse that closed down meaning implies taking an unequivocal political position. In Rodríguez's words, 'you cannot be apolitical as a researcher, as a certain type of "scientists" claim you can' (Barreiro Ortiz 1982: 53).

In their roles as intellectual intermediaries, the Ukamau Group and Silva/Rodríguez drew strength from the political and cultural resources of both indigenous communities and non-indigenous societies. As such they placed themselves simultaneously in the spatio-temporal landscapes of both national and indigenous society. *La nación* and *Nuestra voz*, at once within and outside the indigenous cultural identities they document, define those identities in both essentialising *and* processual terms. Stuart Hall writes of two types of cultural identity that 'Caribbean' or 'Third' cinema might evoke:

> Within the terms of [the first] definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history...This 'oneness', underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence, of 'Caribbeanness. It is this identity which a Caribbean cinema must discover, excavate, bring to light and express... (Hall 1989: 69)

> ...[The second definition] is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture...Like everything which is historical, [cultural identities] undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture, and power...Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past...[The past] is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative, and myth. (Hall 1989: 70-72)

In one sense, the films under study here present idealised visions of indigenous society that cloak an imaginary coherence over a fragmented and contradictory past, whether this 'idealisation' is performed by the filmmakers or by the Indians themselves (Hall's

first definition). But at the same time this coherent sense of a communal 'self' is located in an active political present in which those identities also have a stake – subject, as in Hall's second definition of cultural identity, to the continuous play of history.

On the one hand, just as Mariátegui celebrated the regenerative potential of the Indians' 'Inca communism' (Mariátegui 1968: 45), Sanjinés and Rodríguez/Silva's intentions might have been to present indigenous culture as a resource, a raw material out of which the *whole* of society might be transformed. Sanjinés wrote with characteristic humanism of 'an organic nation, complete, free and respected, in which *all* Bolivians, maintaining their own characteristics, have the same rights, are respected, loved, and respected by the rest' (Sanjinés 1990; emphasis in original). Marta Rodríguez, emphasising her politicised revamping of Jean Rouch's approach to ethnographic filmmaking, declared that 'for us the discussions over *cinéma vérité* hold no weight. The only truth [*vérité*] is Marxist-Leninism and historical materialism' (Rodríguez 1977; see also ch. 3 above). In both visions it would seem that the 'oneness' of indigenous culture acts as the material human 'essence' which must be unveiled in order to 'discover' the true nature of (in these cases) the Bolivian organic nation or the Colombian Marxist-Leninist revolution. But we can only approach an understanding of these films if we recognise that beyond directorial intentionality, they also play a part in performing the process by which identities (indigenous, non-indigenous and any given point in between) are produced.

Yawar Mallku and revolutionary unity

Some years after *Yawar Mallku* (1969) was made and released in Bolivia to enormous popular approval, and after it had won much acclaim on the European festival circuit, Jorge Sanjinés made a substantially different cut of the film at the Bevrijdingsfilms (Libération-Films) film distributor in Leuven, Belgium. Both versions tell the same

story split into two interweaving narrative strands, one set in the Quechua community of Kaata and the other in the Bolivian capital La Paz. The film's didactic message denounces modernity and science as exclusive, catering only for Bolivia's Europeanised elite – this elite is seen to be colonised by the cultural and financial interests of US imperialism. Ignacio, Kaata's *mallku* (leader), is gunned down by the local police superintendent and his lackeys, and his wife Paulina takes him on a long journey to La Paz in search of hospital treatment. She takes him to his brother Sixto, who has left the community to live in the city. Since they cannot afford to buy the blood and medicine the doctors request to save Ignacio's life, Sixto sells his belongings, seeks a loan from an unhelpful *chola* friend, and contemplates stealing a bag from a well-heeled white woman in a marketplace. His last resort, the distinguished Doctor Millán, ignores him, and Ignacio dies. At the same time Paulina tells Sixto how Ignacio came to be shot: after the US 'Progress Corps' arrived in town to set up a medical clinic the community elders discovered, by reading the coca leaves, that the Progress Corps doctors had been surreptitiously sterilising the community's women (including Paulina).[7] Ignacio leads a rebellion which comes to a head when the community members invade the *gringos*' house and mete out justice by castrating one of the male doctors. Ignacio and a few of his companions are rounded up by the police, shot, and left for dead. The final scene shows Sixto, having abandoned his city dress and donned his traditional Indian garb, walking side-by-side with Paulina towards the camera, a close-up of his purposeful face cutting to a still image of raised rifles. The film's message is one constantly revisited and re-worked through Sanjinés' work: indigenous culture must be vindicated as the backbone of a new society, but in conditions of both internal colonialism and neo-colonial external domination, this can only be realised through armed revolt.

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[7] The 'Progress Corps' is a thinly veiled attack on the US Peace Corps' activities in Bolivia at the time. See ch. 3 (above) for *Yawar Mallku*'s links with the Peace Corps' expulsion from Bolivia in 1971.

Both cuts of *Yawar Mallku* begin with Ignacio and Paulina burying Paulina's aborted foetus, followed by Ignacio's shooting, and end with his death; Paulina's narration of the preceding events in Kaata only begin once she arrives in La Paz and meets Sixto. In the initial release cut, which has become best known at least on international circuits, the Kaata and La Paz scenes are henceforth cross-cut together. The Kaata scenes, narrated by Paulina, appear intermittently as flashbacks within the action in La Paz, vertiginously drawing out the symbolic associations between the Progress Corps' nefarious attempts to annihilate the Indian population and the hypocrisy of urban modernity. On the other hand the later version delivers Paulina's flashback in its entirety up to the Indians' assault on the *gringos*' home. Only then does it cut back to the narrative 'now', as we move back to Sixto's efforts to raise funds to save Ignacio, until the film's end.

It seems clear that the rationale behind Sanjinés' initial decision to edit the film with a flashback structure was informed by his belief in the dialectical relationship between past, present and future. It places *Yawar Mallku* on the level that Fanon sees native oral history in the national fight for freedom: 'the formula of "This all happened long ago" is substituted by that of "What we are going to speak of happened somewhere else, but it might well have happened here and today, and it might happen tomorrow' (Fanon 2001: 193).[8] Yet before the director took exile in 1971, the Ukamau Group orchestrated an extensive distribution campaign in rural Andean communities using portable projectors and power generators – an experience that brought Sanjinés into contact with the grassroots of the 'popular classes' to a greater extent than many of his

[8] Hence Gabriel (2000: 302) comments that the flashback and flashforward as used by Glauber Rocha and Ousmane Sembène are perfectly suited to the 'combative phase', since 'the past is necessary for the understanding of the present, and serves as a strategy for the future'. On a slightly different note, one US commentator heartily approval of the flashback structure for rescuing the film from an otherwise general lack of 'sophistication' (Kolker 1983: 298-301).

New Latin American Cinema counterparts.[9] This experience taught him that the flashback structure had a disorienting effect on indigenous peasants unused to the 'conventional' cinematic style that Sanjinés had learnt at film school in Chile, leading him to conclude (as I will discuss below) that the very narrative structure of their carefully-wrought critique of modernity *itself* applied a logic that derived from the very heart of modernity. The flashback cut therefore became the 'version for intellectuals', while the 'simplified' cut was used in subsequent screenings for indigenous Andean audiences. [10]

The Ukamau Group, then, had neither the time, the resources nor the will to teach the logic of Western narrative to inhabitants of Indian communities who had rarely or never come into contact with cinema or television.[11] To do so would have been not only impractical but unethical, for it would have amounted to a disciplinary exercise of colonial power (an act of Westernising acculturation) and ideological authority. For Adorno and Horkheimer (the ideas of the Frankfurt School had in the 1970s gained a renewed impetus in both radical French film theory and Third Cinema circles) the culture industry left the mass of television and cinema viewers 'helpless victims to what is offered to them', they are 'captivated by the myth of success even more than the successful are. Immovably, they insist on the very ideology which enslaves them' (Adorno and Horkheimer 2000: 10). *Yawar Mallku*, of course, offered an ideology radically opposed to that of the culture industry, yet by using methods of commercial cinema, it was arguably partly complicit with the insidious control that the culture industry exercised over the viewer's psyche:

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[9] In citing Medvedkin as his inspiration in establishing the mobile projection unit (see ch. 2 above), Sanjinés underlines his Marxist revolutionary credentials. As Mesa (1985: 191-192) points out, though, the ICB was the pioneer of this distribution mechanism in Bolivia following the 1952 Revolution.

[10] I am indebted to Pablo Franssens for providing me with this information during a number conversations in Leuven in April 2004, and for showing me a copy of the 'simplified' cut of *Yawar Mallku*. A French subtitled version of the film was also made from this cut.

[11] The Empresa Nacional de Televisión (ENTV) was only founded in 1968 upon the closure of the ICB, and began broadcasting its first programmes, initially only in La Paz, in 1969 (Mesa 1985: 60 and 308).

> The sound film…leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of the audience, who is unable to respond within the structure of the film, yet deviate from its precise detail without losing the thread of the story; hence the film forces its viewers to equate it directly with reality…[Films] are so designed that quickness, powers of observation, and experience are undeniably needed to apprehend them at all; yet sustained thought is out of the question if the spectator is not to miss the relentless rush of facts. Even though the effort required for his response is semi-automatic, no scope is left for the imagination. (Adorno and Horkheimer 2000: 9)

The Ukamau Group's solution to the vicissitudes of the commercial idiom was to employ such devices as creating a narrative form that de-centred the individual protagonist, and undermining dramatic tension and linear plot development. In so doing, they sought a cinematic style that would be 'impregnated by the concepts of life and reality inherent to our own social class' (Sanjinés 1986: 47).[12]

It is worth dwelling for a moment on the rhetorical impact of *Yawar Mallku*'s narrative structure, since it is here that we can find the key to the essentialist portrayals of indigenous cultural identity that the later films of both Sanjinés and Silva/Rodríguez tried to overcome. Boiled down to its basic elements (whether the plot is developed through frequent temporal ellipses as in the flashback cut, or in the more chronological fashion of the later cut), *Yawar Mallku* tells a linear story from the Progress Corps' arrival in Kaata to Ignacio's death and Sixto's return to the community. Hart (2003) traces the visual and aural development of four different scenes from the Kaata strand, in each of which the *yatiri* [13] conducts ceremonial readings of coca leaves to find the reason for the village women's infertility. With each ceremony, argues Hart, the lighting and camera angles conspire to portray the *yatiri* as more 'menacing' than in the previous one, and by the final ceremony he has moved from incomprehension to the certainty that 'foreigners are sowing death in our women's wombs'. Just as the *yatiri*'s (and the

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[12] The reasons for Sanjinés' dissatisfaction with the flashback structure, and his subsequent reworking of narrative form, are well-documented. See, for instance, Jorge Sanjinés (1986; 1989); Sánchez-H (1999); García Pabón (2001); and Hart (2003).

[13] Literally, 'person who tells the truth', hence 'scholar' or 'soothsayer'.

villagers') consciousness has been raised by his reading of the coca leaves, the viewer's consciousness is raised through the flashback structure, which persistently underlines the links between the women's infertility and the Progress Corps' presence in Kaata. 'The Amerindian-animist and the revolutionary-political agendas are moving in the same direction. Mama Coca is now a fellow traveller with the Revolution' (Hart 2003: 295).

Moreover, in the flashback-cut of *Yawar Mallku*, parallel motifs are employed in the two narrative strands so as to symbolically flesh out the links between them. The La Paz strand argues that Indians cannot possibly find cultural, economic or political solace in the city, dominated as it is by a culturally colonised elite and populated by mistrusting, alien *mestizos* and *cholos* who are in denial of their 'true' Indian roots. This is continuously juxtaposed with the Kaata strand, in which we see that the oppressive status quo is complicit with North American imperialism, and it must be combated with Indian cultural and political assertion. In one sequence Sixto is forced to sell his belongings as he toils to raise funds for his brother's blood; he then looks on, disinterested, at a military parade playing brass-band music as they march through the streets of La Paz. A cut takes us back to Kaata, with the Progress Corps distributing clothes 'charitably' donated to the Indians by foreign families living in La Paz; later in this same sequence the villagers themselves march, playing Andean pipe music, to the *gringos*' house, dumping the unwanted clothes at their door. By juxtaposing these two scenes, the editor presents the viewer with a clear choice between the city and the *ayllu*. In La Paz, the humiliating laws of the market force Sixto to surrender the few possessions that his meagre wage has enabled him to buy, in order to save his brother's life. In Kaata, the *underside* of capitalist accumulation arrives in the form of donating unwanted consumer goods to charity: the sordid escape-valve for the guilt complex of the bourgeoisie. Rather than allowing themselves to be cowed by this paternalistic

gesture, however, the villagers reject it outright. Sixto's shedding of his city belongings also foreshadows the progressive movement towards the triumphal finale in which he returns to the *ayllu*, clad in Indian dress, ready to join his *compañeros* in their struggle against imperialism. Likewise, the military march in La Paz only alienates Sixto, since it celebrates a national culture of which he can never truly be a part. In stark contrast the Indians' parade signals dignified self-affirmation: a celebration of cultural values that are 'authentic' to those who claim them.

It is as the climactic scenes of the two narrative strands are cut together at *Yawar Mallku*'s *dénouement*, that the film's dichotomous separation between colonising, elitist, urban modernity and authentic, heroic, rural tradition becomes most apparent. The men of Kaata, seemingly lit only by the flaming torches they bear aloft, descend on the *gringos*' comfortable, Western-style chalet, which is bathed in artificial light, while the doctors dance to the loud 60s funk music on their record player. [14] As the Indians round on the head doctor to castrate him in repentance for the sterilisation, he desperately appeals to both scientific and political authority: 'I'm a scientist! My Embassy won't allow...' Aurally, the Indians' revolt is drowned out by the funk music that marks the cultural identity of a (perhaps) well-meaning generation of young US 'progressives', perhaps unaware of the wider implications of their charitable work. Previously the sound-track had maintained a rigid separation between indigenous music in the Kaata scenes, and foreign or *mestizo* music in the La Paz scenes; the first time that the *gringos*' music contaminates the *ayllu*, those who bring it are violently ousted.

The camera then reframes right until the screen is filled with black, and an imperceptible cut leads us to Ignacio's dark hospital room. The camera tilts down to show the *mallku* lying close to death in alien, clinical surroundings. The following scene

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[14] However as I pointed out in relation to the interior scenes of *Ukamau* in ch. 2, it would appear that the villagers' flickering torchlight is supplemented by a fill-light. In this sequence this is particularly noticeable when, in a close-up on Ignacio at the end of the *yatiri* ceremony, a constant source of light illuminates the underside of the brim of his hat, symbolising his conscious, enlightened state of mind.

shows the national elite embracing the political and scientific authority of the *gringos* while it suppresses not only the Indians' cultural values but their very participation in this foreign modernity. Sixto enters the La Paz boardroom and tries to gain the attention of Doctor Millán, (Sixto's last chance of finding blood), as a government representative at the meeting extols the virtues of the work of the Peace Corps in rural Bolivia, welcoming 'these knights of science who come here interested only in bringing us what they know; they show us that it is necessary to banish the feathered witch-doctor who must be replaced by the scientist'.[15] As Millán and his colleagues scornfully brush aside the 'underdeveloped' majority of Bolivia that embraces popular wisdom and spiritual medicine, Sixto is ejected from the room. Scientific rationalism is cold comfort for Ignacio, who dies when his blood transfusion fails to materialise – the 'wide and shining avenue of progress' espoused by the Bolivian government, far from a universal good, is seen to be in cahoots with the imperialist political and cultural project of Western capitalism.

Yawar Mallku's protagonists come into contact with and rebel against white, *mestizo* and foreign cultures; their firm geo-ethnic identities timelessly predate their representation on celluloid. For Feder (1999: 167), the film constructs 'the kind of structurally-induced separatism that, even though historically contingent, perpetuates the kind of power imbalances it had wished to undo'. In its haste to valorise indigenous culture as the backbone of a new society, it urges miscegenated urban *cholos* to take political action in the present precisely by returning to an idealised millenarian culture that (at least for the present-day viewers who continue to pack Sanjinés retrospectives in La Paz) may well no longer exist. The idealisation of indigenous culture seems to amount to what Hall (writing on the Caribbean diasporic yearning for the African

[15] All translations from *Yawar Mallku* are taken from the English subtitled version.

homeland) calls a collusion with the West, which 'normalises' and appropriates Africa by freezing it into some timeless zone of the "primitive", unchanging past' (1989: 75).

In *Yawar Mallku*, revolutionary urgency calls for the unity of indigenous cultural identity – gender difference, for instance, is not addressed. Oppositional readings, of course, are possible. Schiwy (unpublished: ch.1) points out that while Paulina rarely speaks, 'she looks and the camera follows this look', and that she is the narrator of the Kaata sequences. However, she notes that 'her gaze is never fully established' and it is Sixto who truly drives the action, since it is he that makes the final (masculine) realisation that oppression comes simultaneously from class and ethnic perspectives. Moreover, I would add, when the viewer looks through Paulina's eyes, s/he is sutured into an identification with a feminised, impotent Indian race alienated by the city. As Paulina enters La Paz, the camera pans across the city's gleaming skyscrapers, expressing her disorientation with extreme low-angle point-of-view shots of the modern buildings that tower above her, disfigured by a short focal length that distends their lines outwards, constructing the city as Other, alien and unfathomable. The next shot cuts to a high-angle shot of her, the innocent, rural Indian woman cowering into the truck she is travelling on. Tense wind and string music on the soundtrack hammers home her sense of disorientation. Similarly she is linguistically neutered in La Paz, unable to communicate with Ignacio's Spanish-speaking doctor. Feder (1999: 167) suggests that for a film about female sterilisation, *Yawar Mallku* has scant regard for the specific effects on the community's women. It instead casts the Progress Corps' activities onto a symbolic level on which the entire, feminised Indian race is sterilised (or castrated) by (masculine) imperialism, and it is only when the Indians regain their masculinity (by ritually castrating the *gringo*) that they are able to assert political control. The cultural essence of indigenous culture is idealised, but the

male business of political determination must now be rescued from its temporary, disempowered, feminised state.

The elimination of the flashback structure, then, was the first in a long series of steps to adapt film form to the cultural and political 'authenticity' of the Bolivian (or Andean) people. It was also presented as a provocative turn away from the polished production values of commercial or art-house cinema. Like other filmmakers of the New Latin American Cinema, the Ukamau Group (and Silva and Rodríguez) converted the economic weakness of Third World cinema into strategic strength: the techniques of mainstream cinema were not only economically infeasible but aesthetically and politically undesirable. Glauber Rocha's seminal 1965 manifesto for the Brazilian Cinema Novo (Rocha 1997) proposed a new way for cinema to express the abject starvation in which most Brazilian people lived: an 'aesthetic of hunger' in which, 'in a symbiosis of theme and method, the lack of technical resources was metaphorically transmogrified into an expressive force' (Shohat and Stam 1994: 256). For Rocha, underlying Europe's imagination of the 'underdeveloped world' was a romanticised 'nostalgia for primitivism' ('our greatest misery is that this hunger is felt but not intellectually understood'). This emotive primitivism needed to be replaced by an aesthetic that at once produced lucid intellectual cognition of political reality *and* bypassed the methods of the mass media's fraudulent depictions of the Third World. 'We know', declared Rocha, 'that this hunger will not be cured by moderate government reforms and that the cloak of technicolor [sic.] cannot hide, but only aggravates, its tumours' (Rocha 1997: 60). Julio García Espinosa's equally influential Cuban manifesto of 1969, 'For an Imperfect Cinema', picked up on Rocha's themes, calling for a truly popular mass art that was created *by* the masses, rather than an alienating mass culture created *for* the masses in the interests of state power and capitalist accumulation. Again, this position involved a strategic rejection of the

'reactionary' production values of Hollywood and art-cinema (both here appear to be collapsed into 'perfect cinema'), since they required that the masses learn, or absorb, artistic codes foisted upon them by political or cultural elites. 'Taste as defined by "high culture," once it is "overdone," is normally passed on to the rest of society as leftovers to be devoured and ruminated over by those who were not invited to the feast' (García Espinosa 1997: 75).

The Ukamau Group's theoretical and methodological approach to film in the 1970s bore out García Espinosa's and Rocha's thinking, not least in their use of non-professional actors, and efforts were made to adapt the entire filmmaking process to indigenous villagers' cultural precepts and daily lives. Much commented on is the story of the Ukamau Group's arrival in Kaata in 1968 to film *Yawar Mallku*: Sanjinés tells that, despite having gained acceptance from the community leader Marcelino Yanahuaya, he and his crew met with suspicion and hostility from the villagers. They became frustrated with the *indios*' rejection of the wages they were offering ('ten times higher than those generally paid by the exploitative middlemen of the area', according to Sanjinés), and failed to understand that Yanahuaya's leadership consisted in acting as a representative of equals, not in maintaining a hierarchical disciplinary regime. They had not realised that the leader's blessing was on no account an acceptance of their presence by the entire community. It was only when the filmmakers submitted themselves to a *jaiwaco* (a nocturnal reading of coca leaves, such as those depicted in *Yawar Mallku*) that their paternalism and disruption to the community was pardoned and they were allowed to stay.[16]

Their quest for a more horizontal relationship with their indigenous subjects/collaborators was tightly bound to questions of film form:

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[16] Sanjinés tells this story at length in Sanjinés (1986: 43-47), as well as in many other interviews and writings. His 1995 film *Para recibir el canto de los pájaros* is a critical re-enactment of this experience. Hart (2003) gives a comparative reading of *Yawar Mallku* and *Canto*.

> [In *Yawar Mallku*] we were employing a formal treatment that led us to select scenes according to our personal likes, without taking into account their communicability or their cultural meaning. (Sanjinés 1997: 63-4).
>
> ...making revolution and winning liberation must be tasks *totally at one* with the spirit of [the] majority... Each revolutionary act, if it corresponds to the will of the collective, will be infused with a genuine cultural breadth; thus, each measure, each step, will be consolidating the *national identity*. (Sanjinés and Ukamau Group 1989: 95, emphasis in original).

But for Sanjinés, as much as for Silva and Rodríguez, this in no way implied that revolutionary cinema should surrender the mantle of aesthetic accomplishment to 'reactionary' cinema. The Ukamau Group's 'cinema with the people' should be just as beautiful (and therefore alluring) as 'bourgeois' cinema, but whereas the latter subordinated content to form, 'revolutionary cinema must seek beauty not as an end but as a means' (Sanjinés 1997: 62). Form becomes not exactly *subordinate* to content, but determined by the *needs* of content. In this case, since content is determined by the collective, a non-individualistic style and practice of filmmaking must apply.

Lurking behind much of Sanjinés' project is the suggestion that the film medium itself is somehow naturally and ontologically allied with the masses. His theoretical and practical work intimates that cinema has no inherent ideological charge; rather it has been energised and codified at various different historical moments to validate given ideological agendas. The alienating idiom of mainstream narrative cinema is the result of its appropriation by the capitalist bourgeoisie. Only through a deconstruction of such cinema, and its *re*-construction following the logic of the masses, can it become truly popular; herein lies this cinema's 'beauty'.

In an interview with Jorge Silva and Marta Rodríguez, the Colombian film critic Umberto Valverde challenged their work (as well as that of Sanjinés) for the essentialising overtones of such a position, implying as it did a petty-bourgeois guilt complex that 'my truth is not the truth', for running 'the risk of believing that the collective consciousness, the historical truth, is the preserve of one social group, say, an

indigenous community' (Valverde 1978: 331). The Colombian filmmakers retorted that the avoidance of such assumptions (reminiscent of the 'primitivism' that Glauber Rocha wrote of) was for them paramount. They rejected the populist implications of the belief that the filmmaker could merely hold the camera while the people 'directed' the work, describing themselves instead as 'political militants and creators' (see my discussion of *Agarrando pueblo* in ch. 2 above).

For Silva, to try to allow their subjects total control over the aesthetic rendering of their reality could be dangerous, due (in the case of *Campesinos*) to the peasants' long process of unwittingly internalising the ideology of the dominant classes (Valverde 1978: 332). The corollary of Silva's argument is that 'truth' cannot possibly lie solely with, say, the peasant masses, since they have internalised dominant ideology, and therefore no longer have unmediated access to their own 'true' culture. Here, and in many writings by and interviews with Sanjinés, the committed vanguard intellectual is seen as one with a privileged comprehension of reality, guiding the people away from the lies of the institutionalised media. But there is also a realisation that the people with whom they make films must acquire a knowledge (which must come from within their own cultures) of the racial aspect of their oppression *alongside* the class perspective that they, as urban intellectuals, brought. The very fact that these filmmakers worked so closely with indigenous communities suggests a more nuanced approach than one informed by a purely class-based notion of false consciousness. Following Gramsci, Stuart Hall proposes that

> we would get much further along the road to understanding how the regime of capital can function *through* differentiation and difference, rather than through similarity and identity, if we took more seriously this question of the cultural, social, national, ethnic and gendered composition of historically different and specific forms of labour. (Hall 1996: 436, emphasis in original)

I would suggest that between them these films, with a firmly partisan rejection of distanced, humanist objectivity, go some way towards an understanding of the multi-

faceted nature of capitalism's subordination of its indigenous, rural, working-class, culturally 'other', and (in some cases) female peons.

Challenging modernity in *La nación clandestina*

Ana López traces an evolution from the earlier films and theoretical writings of the New Latin American Cinema, which held to 'a naïve belief in the camera's ability to record "truths" – to capture a national reality or essence without any mediation', to the later works in which

> "Realism," no longer seen as tied to simple perceptual truth or to a mimetic approximation of the real, was increasingly used to refer to a self-conscious material practice. The cinema's powers of representation – its ability to reproduce the surface of the lived world – were activated not as a record or duplication of that surface, but in order to explain it, to reveal its hidden aspects, to disclose the material matrix that determined it. (López 1990: 407-408)

The latter definition of realism certainly applies to the montage-based 'reconstructive method' of narrative developed in *El coraje del pueblo*, in which, 'by means of a series of leaps from one historical situation to another, the secret connection, the internal logic, the interrelationships of historical phenomena are elucidated' (Sanjinés 1986: 41). But as I outlined in the previous chapter, *Coraje* also holds much faith in the ethnographic veracity of the miners' reconstructions of their own personal and collective memories, while the filmmaker's intervention (for example, by montage editing) acts as an auxiliary to the authentic filmed image, didactically adding historical depth to the testimonies. *La nación* upholds the dialectic between the inherent reality-value of the filmed image and an external, analytical wider historical and political explanation and contextualisation. But in this later film, I believe, the historical contextualisation is materially inscribed into the 'authentic' perceptions of the indigenous subjects. The film seeks to be no longer an outsider's interpretation and elaboration of an 'alien' reality, but rather to write itself into and become a part of that reality:

> In our previous attempts we basically tried to convey the impression that the viewer was participating within the scene. The camera's movement was an interpretation of its own point of view and it selected moments and framing on the basis of the natural and logical interests of dramatic action...
> [In *La nación clandestina*], so as not to go on imposing an alien, external, intrusive, dominating point of view,...the rhythm was to be determined from *within* [the action], by the movement of people and things, which both provided the motivation for and generated camera movements, close-ups and long shots that served to integrate the entire group. (Sanjinés 1989: 68-70)

La nación confronts *Yawar Mallku*'s ethnic essentialism, and through the figure of its central protagonist Sebastián, it dramatises several decades of negotiations between indigenous and national politics. One scene shows Sebastián working as a Ranger in the Bolivian military, attempting to convince his brother and father to surrender their arms under the military-peasant pact: 'The army has a pact with the farmers. They don't need guns any more. What they need is machinery. We've had agricultural reform and revolution'. Sebastián's brother and father violently reject his integrationist efforts, remarking not only that it was these very weapons that had won agrarian reform, but that ongoing current government-led massacres in mining areas signal a need to continue struggling against the regime (a vindication of Sanjinés' belief in the need for a peasant-worker alliance, discussed in ch. 3). As Sebastián makes his way back to Willkani to dance the *Jacha Tata Danzante* in the film's narrative 'present', he meets with one of the blockades installed by *ayllus* on the *altiplano* in solidarity with urban resistance to the bloody coup that is occurring in La Paz.[17]

The indigenous protestors, a fleeing leftist student leader and the army are all met with indifference by Sebastián, who instead sits by the roadside to mend the bells of his mask. As Schiwy notes, Sebastián's final arrival in Willkani to dance to his death stands in stark contrast with the community members, who at the same time are returning with their dead after fighting in solidarity with their mining comrades.

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[17] The film does not state specifically at what historical juncture it is set; neither, to my knowledge, has Sanjinés himself. However, Souza (1999: 253-254) reasonably places the narrative present in November 1979, during the brief but vicious fortnight of Colonel Alberto Natusch Busch's military rule.

(Schiwy unpublished: ch. 1). Unlike in *Yawar Mallku* (and unlike the 1970s exile films), the indigenous are seen as having a real stake in the historical and political formation of the Bolivian nation, involving not only virulent opposition but also seduction and incorporation into national politics. If *La nación* proposes (along the lines of Stuart Hall's first model of cultural identity) a return to an essential and already-formed indigeneity, Aymara identity here is at least not as 'pure' as previous films had portrayed it to be.

I would concur with Schiwy that the most crucial scenes of *La nación* are those that dramatise the conflict between, on the one hand, Sebastián's 'cultural turn', which gives primacy to the folkloric and historical revival of indigenous traditions, and on the other, the social and political struggle represented by the indigenous blockades. She argues further that Sebastián's death is portrayed as being 'utterly meaningless...unless the cultural revival is coupled with social action,' reading the film as a critique of a 1980s current of Indianism that foregrounded folkloric cultural values over meaningful political action:

> The division between the victim of urban racism that seeks to recover his identity after having denied it remains divided from his politically engaged community. His sacrifice returns him to the community but in death, no longer able to make a difference in the present struggle of his community. The powerful Andean concept of *nayra pacha*, a past that is present and informs the future, is here cancelled out. The recovery of indigenous identity is thus emptied of its ethical and political significance for indianist politics. (Schiwy unpublished).

I would add, however, that the structural and narrative strategies employed in *La nación* equally suggest that *political* action is also meaningless if not accompanied by cultural revival. In one of his most important theoretical essays since *Teoría y práctica junto al pueblo* (Sanjinés and Ukamau Group 1979) Sanjinés outlines the 'integral sequence shot', the visual and narrative lynchpin of *La nación*'s subversion of Western epistemology (Sanjinés 1989). The Ukamau Group had spent much of the 1970s producing and exhibiting their films in different Latin American countries, and the

integral sequence shot is the formal realisation of the pan-Andean indigenous/worker identity they sought to consolidate with *El enemigo principal* (Peru, 1973) and *¡Fuera de aquí!* (Ecuador, 1977). In the essay 'The integral sequence shot', Andean thought is characterised as a system in which 'the collective prevails over the individual', while Quechua narrative form ('Quechua', it seems, is used as shorthand for Andean) 'is built upon the prior divulging of the plot, so that the contents of the story take precedence over the ins and outs of the narrative' (Sanjinés 1989: 66). Western cinema, with its grammatical preference for close-ups, intrigue and identification with a single main character, is seen as dramatically consistent with a world-view founded on the Hellenic-Judeo-Christian belief in a unique deity in the image of man. This culture, for Sanjinés, led to a pervasive individualism that spawned the sanctity of private property, personal accumulation and the dominance of man over man. Western cinematic narrative reflects Western philosophy's conception of time and space as quantifiable, measurable and saleable substances, malleable to the needs of the individual; its modes of storytelling naturally fragment time and space, re-assembling them according to the dramatic needs of plot.

Sanjinés therefore argues for a respect for the natural unity of time and space by 'neutralising' plot and by using sequence shots and long-shots with deep focus, allowing the filmed image to encompass all of the protagonists of a scene rather than privileging a single character who drives the narrative forward. Decisions regarding length of take and rhythm of editing are determined by the needs of the action; the cinematographer is subordinate to the actors playing out the scene. The director's evocation of 'reflexive space' harks back to Andre Bazin's celebration of deep focus, signalling 'the regeneration of realism in storytelling and thus...[the capability] of bringing together real time, in which things exist, along with the duration of the action, for which classical [Hollywood] editing had insidiously substituted mental and abstract

times' (Bazin 1999: 56). Yet Sanjinés goes beyond Bazin's liberal-democratic celebration of spatio-temporal unity, which implies 'a more mental attitude on the part of the spectator and a more positive contribution on his part to the action in progress' (Bazin 1999: 54). In *La nación* the maintenance of spatial and temporal unity remains a firmly anti-colonial enterprise that not only is consistent with indigenous spatio-temporality, but *also* opens up space for the viewer to link screen reality to their own historical reality, and take political action in the present. Western narrative, on the other hand, 'manipulates attention by closing down reflexive spaces and times' (Sanjinés 1989: 66). A (perhaps simplified) conception of indigenous narrative form is dextrously merged into the type of militant spectatorship proposed in the heat of the New Latin American Cinema by the Argentine radicals Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, who put forward that

> a film that is closed in on itself casts the viewer down into a passive, spectatorial role, with the option of approving or rejecting. A film that transmits experiences and knowledge that are *not yet concluded*, and that invites its audience to complete them and to critically question them, transforms the viewers into co-authors and live protagonists of the action. (Solanas and Getino 1973: 163-4)

What the Ukamau Group; Solanas and Getino; and Rodríguez and Silva all shared was a conception of 'Western' (or 'bourgeois', or 'Hollywood') cinema that resembled Noel Burch's notion of the 'Institutional Mode of Representation' (IMR).[18] For Burch the basis of the IMR was what he called 'linear discourse', defined by Rodowick as

> an ideological determination of codes that ensures the suppression of paradigmatic forms of textual organization in favor of those syntagmatic articulations that guarantee the transparent expression of the diegesis [...] through a mechanistic relation of cause and effect and the subordination of signifier to signified' (Rodowick 1988: 112-113).

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[18] Burch's writings on cinema were a formative intellectual influence for the Ukamau Group. I am grateful to César Pérez for providing me with this insight.

In other words, the 'Western' form that Sanjinés himself criticised in *Yawar Mallku*, and which Rodríguez and Silva had also found to be problematic for Colombian indigenous peasants, rested on a set of narrative codes that ensured the seamless glide of plot at the expense of the symbolic or metaphorical properties of the filmed image. Burch posed that mainstream narrative cinema, with roots in the nineteenth-century novel, created an illusory 'transparent narrative time' that, by negating the materiality of the cinematic process, equated its own ideologically-charged language with 'reality'. Such false transparency, which he denounced as the 'zero point of cinematic style', was stripped of its legitimacy and universality; it was therefore up to the radical filmmaker to forge their own idiom, finding 'a truly consistent relationship between a film's spatial and temporal articulations and its narrative content, formal structure determining narrative structure as much as vice versa' (Burch 1973: 15). Rodowick suggests that Burch's utopian nostalgia for 'primitive' (pre-industrial) cinema formed the basis of his modernist mythology, envisioning a situation in which 'cinema is recuperated from the class to which it was "naturally" allied in its beginnings, co-opted by the bourgeoisie, and developed industrially according to a style that contravened its "proper" forms'. Moreover, for Rodowick this position implies an idealisation of the proletariat (the true doyen of primitive cinema) as 'a fully self-identical class-subject that is intrinsically capable of nonideological knowing' (Rodowick 1988: 122).

Here, though, Sanjinés and Burch diverge. The French theorist, in the face of the alienating practices of mainstream narrative cinema, advocated a radical modernist film practice that deconstructed the aesthetic premises of dominant cinema. He regarded *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* as a pioneering work of such deconstruction, praising its undermining of the precepts of mainstream narrative: linear causality; the illusion of spatial depth; the illusion of continuity and verisimilitude in diegetic space; and linear narrative exposition (see Rodowick 1988: 116). Yet *La nación*, faced with the

immediate social urgency of communicating with a wide constituency of viewers and participating directly in political change, bypasses the deconstructive stage of Burch's process to construct a 'new' cinematic grammar. Unlike Burch, who nostalgically harks back to the primal unity of primitive cinema, the primal unity of Sanjinés' cinema is located in the formal structures of his reading of present-day indigenous culture. An aesthetically essentialised vision of Aymara narrative is activated to encourage the viewer to renew and transform the political present. [19] It is perhaps paradoxical that the Ukamau Group's realisation of the repressive nature of Western narrative, combined with the political urgency to *re*construct cinematic realism under a new law, brought them almost full circle back to the Bazinian spatio-temporal unity that Burch himself had dismissed as a naïve, outmoded faith in the mimetic properties of film.[20] In fact the Integral Sequence Shot arguably holds even more faith in cinema's documentary reproductive capacity than did Bazin's notion of the reconciliation of real and dramatic time. The French critic celebrated deep space as a mode of conveying a spatio-temporal universe artificially constructed by the director and camera, who 'have converted the screen into a dramatic checkerboard, planned down to the last detail' (Bazin 1999: 51). On the other hand Sanjinés' camera is endowed here with the capacity to reflect, document and participate in an *already existing* material and cosmic reality.

Much of *La nación*'s originality lies in the fact that, at the same time that its aesthetic eschews first-person identification and empathy, it seeks to draw the spectator into its temporally and spatially deep analysis of Bolivian history on a *collective* level in a way that is, in Rodowick's terms, as paradigmatic as it is syntagmatic. As García Pabón (2001) points out, *La nación* rejects the Brechtian distancing used in *El enemigo*

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[19] It is useful here to recall Michael Chanan's contention, quoted in ch. 3, that while 1970s European/North American radical film theory and Latin American radical film practice shared a belief in the need to destroy certain institutionalised grammatical norms in cinema, Latin American filmmakers had little time to philosophise on the 'truth' of the film image. For Sanjinés in 1989, several years into Bolivia's democratic 'opening', this was very much still the case. See Chanan (1997).

[20] See Annette Michelson's introduction to Burch, 1973: pp.v-xv.

principal and *¡Fuera de aquí!*. In *Enemigo*, the narrative flow is periodically interrupted by the narrator Saturnino Huillca (a Peruvian peasant union leader) appearing onscreen to divulge the plot of the coming sequence, thereby doing away altogether with the strategy of narrative suspense, 'to prevent the viewer from becoming trapped by the dynamics of the narrative, and allowing them the space to reflect' (Sanjinés 2003). With its alienation devices (narrative interruption; the total absence of the single protagonist) the film made in Peru reminds the viewers of its own materiality at every turn, creating a constant dialogue between diegesis and reality; between the individual psyche and the revolutionary collective. For Brecht, the tension created in the development and resolution of plot in classical mimetic theatre creates an empathy between viewer and hero that enthrals the viewer in a pretence of reality, a hypnotic evasion of the real world beyond the confines of suspended disbelief. In such art content is the slave of form: in classical dramatic opera, for instance, the 'sense… [is] absorbed in sensual satisfaction,' so that '[t]he content [is] smothered in the opera' (Brecht 1964: 39). The involvement in the pretence drew a dividing line between stage and street: 'empathy alone may stimulate a wish to imitate a hero, but it can hardly create the capacity' (Brecht 1964: 247). The schematic and didactic *Enemigo* aimed to instil in its indigenous peasant viewers both the capacity *and* the wish to perform heroism on a collective level: the rational realisation of the need to revolt was required to be stronger than the emotive pull of the aesthetics.[21]

In *La nación*, though, the rational revolutionary will is constructed *out of* the seductive sequence shot with its attempts to 'create a reality that is more real than the impression of reality that we live every day', by 'fascinating the viewer, bewitching him

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[21] Pablo Franssens recalls that when distributed in Europe, *Enemigo* met with disappointment amongst many audiences, who had become accustomed to the seductive combination of suspense and revolutionary sentiment in the Ukamau Group's previous films (conversation, April 2004). In *¡Fuera de aquí!*, a *non*-diegetic voice-over (performed by Sanjinés himself) served a similar function to Huillca's role in *Enemigo*. It is perhaps their uncompromising attitude towards aesthetics that make *Enemigo* and *Fuera de aquí* probably the least well-known and most narrowly distributed of Sanjinés' feature fiction films today on an international level. In contrast, for these two films' immense popularity among radical European intellectuals in the 1970s, see ch. 1.

with the magic of the images and sounds' (Sanjinés 1999: 34 and 41). The director's theoretical piece 'Guión y realidad' (Script and Reality), a seminar paper delivered in Lima in 1997, condemns mainstream cinema not for its seductive use of film language per se (MacCabe's metalanguage, described in ch. 3) but for its tendency to employ that language in the service of a 'deceptive', formulaic and often violent view of reality. It is therefore the job of the scriptwriter (and by extension, one can assume, the director) to 'capture' the viewer in a 'hypnosis' deriving from a studied and 'truthful' depiction of the world (Sanjinés 1999: 35).[22] Recognising that the film is consonant with their own society's 'internal rhythms', the viewer will naturally engage in a creative and poetic (rather than rational) determination to change, or to participate in the ongoing construction of, that reality:

> A script, the spirit and soul of a film, can lay out the means whereby the true and profound dimensions of reality can be conveyed, transforming everyday life, reinventing it, deforming it, changing it, through a process, that is to say art, that goes beyond rational intelligence, that is closer to the power of intuition, so as to bring to us the true nature of things in a marvellous way…
> …So if this "naming" of reality assumes a "constitutive" status, that is, if it contains a revelation of the way things are, it will be infused with the power of truth. And that work of art will be "constructing" society, prolonging and broadening its own culture. (Sanjinés 1999: 34, 41).

Such a vision, of course, maintains the role of the vanguard (and still revolutionary) intellectual proposed in the earlier films, and broken down by subsequent indigenous video-making projects (see ch. 5; also Schiwy unpublished and Schiwy 2002a). It also recalls Walter Benjamin's contention that cinema overcame pictorial art's auratic and timeless hue, gained by the inherent temporal, spatial and psychological distance between observer and painting. But while Benjamin notes that in commercial cinema the individualised aura of the movie star is replaced by 'the "spell of personality," the

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[22] For Sanjinés, quoting Rudolf Arnheim, the films of the New Latin American cinema that retained their relevance over the years were those that 'bewitched through their art, through the direct impact of sounds and moving forms, and not through their discourse' (Jorge Sanjinés 1999: 40). The fact that the Bolivian director quotes Arnheim here shows that his faith in the silent abstractionism that characterised *Ukamau* is still very much alive.

phony spell of a commodity' (Benjamin 1999: 224); the 'ideal viewer' of *La nación* is seduced not by the economic exchange-value of its stars or production values,[23] but by the historical and political understanding embodied within César Pérez's cinematography.

The integral sequence shot, then, combines an essentialising, *ahistorical* notion of the nature of 'the people's internal rhythms' with a *political* will to place the collective empathy deriving from the instinctive recognition of those rhythms at the service of social change. Furthermore just as the cinematography and editing spatially integrate 'historical actors' within the geography of the *altiplano* (a technique much used by Sanjinés: see my discussion of *Ukamau* in ch. 1), the narrative structure knits Sebastián's personal journey into the wider, mythologised journey of indigenous and national history in Bolivia. The temporal scope of the diegesis covers Sebastián's walk back to Willkani, and via flashbacks narrates Sebastián's participation in various chapters in the recent history of both his *ayllu* and of the Bolivian nation (see above). Unlike the flashbacks of *Yawar Mallku* these episodes are not organised according to the rhetorical requirements of dramatic tension. The transitions between the narrative 'present' and 'past' are not marked by the fades or dissolves that in conventional cinematic narrative denote a temporal shift, making the 'past' sequences appear less as prompts that add historical depth to a narrative present, than as part of a temporal sphere constructed vertically around Sebastián's psyche, slipping in and out of synch with the memorial time of his *pueblo*. In the opening sequence Uncle Tankara, a village elder, proclaims that 'our past comes back to the present. It is the present. We live in the past and present at the same time'.

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[23] See ch. 1 for a discussion of the Ukamau Group's efforts, through their highly unconventional approach to distribution and exhibition, to maintain a total separation from the economic infrastructures of national and globalised film industries. Even though *La nación* was co-produced with Spanish and UK television channels, care was taken to avoid the type of 'interference' visited by Italian and German TV upon *El coraje del pueblo*. Alan Fountain (2005), who was involved in the production of *La nación* for the UK station Channel 4, recalls that the political values prevailing at Channel 4 in the late 1980s allowed politically engaged TV producers to 'use Channel 4's money to support worthwhile work'.

The integral sequence shot, having spat out the metalanguage of a Western narrative tradition that converts time and space into fragmented units of exchange, erects its own, *Andean* metalanguage – what we might call an 'Andean realism' – that idealises and normalises Aymara time. After Sebastián has been discovered embezzling money from a North American aid programme while acting as community leader, the six-minute sequence from his capture, through the community meeting and up to his final expulsion, contains just three cuts. Actors, cinematographer and editor utilise space through 360 degrees: after Sebastián is captured the camera spins right round on its axis to establish a new plane of action as it accommodates the gathering crowd. The hand-held camera stands at the edge of the crowd as Sebastián is dragged to the front, remaining in long-shot as various speakers move forwards from various angles to air their views. The camera paces around the edge of the group and crosses the centre circle as the speakers shuffle in and out of shot. It approaches one speaker to move him into medium close-up at the right-hand edge of the screen, with Sebastián standing at the opposite edge; the rest of the screen is taken up by the crowd, looming in the background but occupying centre-stage and clearly visible in deep focus. As the villagers argue over the traitor's fate the hand-held camera establishes its point of view behind the speakers; but a cut away to Sebastián's wife, mother and brother joining the meeting flips the plane yet again to the opposite side of the axis, opening up a further field of space to reveal yet more villagers looking on in the distance. The camera integrates itself into the crowd to the extent that it appears to encompass *all* the available space.

There is no deconstructionist suggestion here of a 'lacking' or absent off-screen space or time; there is no possibility for a narrative 'outside', beyond the action we are shown. In another departure from Brechtian alienation, *La nación* reinforces the mythologised idea of Andean time as a permanent, immutable continuum. In his

critique of classical theatre and mimetic performance style, Brecht proclaimed that 'we must drop our habit of taking the social structures of past periods, then stripping them of everything that makes them different, so that they all look more or less like our own, which then acquires...a certain air of having been there all along,...of permanence. Instead we must leave them their distinguishing marks and keep their impermanence always before our eyes, so that our own period can be seen to be impermanent too' (Brecht 1964: 190). Brecht argued against a theatrical mode that, in giving the impression that the present historical period was timeless and natural, bolstered the efforts by reactionary political forces to prevent revolutionary social change. On the contrary, in *La nación* the force of the Jacha Tata Danzante is the very similarity between its rendition by Benedicto, the community member who Sebastián witnessed dancing it as a boy, and Sebastián's own. The film dramatises the encounter between Brecht's European notion of revolution and that of the Aymara inhabitants of Willkani (or of Bolivia). *Pachakuti*'s revolutionary force emerges partly from a forward temporal movement from past to future, but every progression simultaneously involves a cyclical return to the past: in the shifting spirals of past and present, permanence plays as central a role as change. The integral sequence shot reflects the notion that lived time is both historically unchanging *and* engages with ongoing processes of social upheaval. Thus *La nación*'s apparently nostalgic evocation of historical sameness is part of its political strength. [24]

If *La nación* in some respect narrates the clash between indigenous and non-indigenous histories, the Andean conception of history as a cyclical repetition of an organic process (rather than a European march towards national progress) is embodied in one of the film's visual motifs. As Sebastián is ousted from the *ayllu*, a high-angle extreme long-shot frames him from a mountain ridge, being carried slowly on the back

[24] For a discussion of Andean concepts of cyclical time, see Estermann (1998: 179-189).

of a donkey across the vast altiplano below; a steep tilt up reveals that it is from Sebastián's point-of-view (in the present, journeying back to Willkani) that we have been observing this scene. Many of the 'flashbacks' end with a similar shot, and it becomes clear than Sebastián's *personal* past exists within his own present as he undergoes the long process of atoning for his wrongdoings. In *La nación*'s final sequence, though, individual identification is cast onto the broader plane of a communal, trans-historical indigenous consciousness.

After the Jacha Tata Danzante brings Sebastián's death, his funeral procession is framed in a slow, baleful extreme-long-shot before a closer shot then pans and tracks across the mourners as they walk past. The camera stops on the last mourner in the group – Sebastián himself. He stops and watches the ceremony proceed, the frame freezes in medium-close-up and the credits roll. In observing his own funeral Sebastián completes his personal journey of self-consciousness, of realising his individual role in the indigenous and national spheres – a message that Beatriz Palacios, *La nación*'s executive producer, found to have struck a chord among viewers at the film's premiere in Sucre (see Gamboa 1999: 241). But in transcending the narrative 'now' of his lifetime, Sebastián also acts as an organic spiritual presence informing and renewing the cultural *and political* memory of his community. The film's abiding image, I would argue, is that of his *compañeros*, recently returned from their struggles alongside the miners, bearing aloft Sebastián's body in celebration of his reactivation of the collective oral memory. As García Pabón observes, 'he recuperates an infantile memory *and* a history long before the creation of the Bolivian state' (García Pabón 2001; my emphasis). As in *Yawar Mallku* a short-term tactical defeat (Ignacio's death; the Willkani *compañeros*' defeat at the hands of the Bolivian army) is overcome by a long-term cultural victory. In *Yawar Mallku* Sixto takes the personal decision to return to the community; in *La nación* the re-indigenised Aymara's return fertilises the soil on which

his comrades live. His funeral acts as a ritual ceremony bringing the past and the future into the communal present, giving *Willkani* the cultural self-confidence to reject, on a cultural and historical level, the linear progress of modernity and development.

Andean rationalities: *Campesinos* and *Nuestra voz de tierra, memoria y futuro*

As I have discussed above, revolutionary Andean *indigenista* cinema in the 1970s and 1980s sought to undermine Western art's centring of the individual. Filmmakers were inspired by the need both to relativise the supposed universality of European or Eurocentric aesthetic and philosophical tenets, and to radically reconstruct modes of representation in a way coherent with the indigenous communities they worked with. The cinematic medium was a product of Western technology whose 'universal' underlying grammatical structures, taught in film schools across the world, owed much to historically specific circumstance (see my discussion of Burch, ch. 5). In *Nuestra voz de tierra, memoria y futuro* (Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva, Colombia, 1982), the disciplinary knowledge of documentary cinema's Eurocentric heritage meets with an indigenous culture that presents a radical challenge to the regime of distanced visuality that lies at the heart of Western documentary cinema's evolution.

Early documentary cinema tended towards self-reflexion, often narrating its own process of fabrication alongside or within the story of its subject: a film, for instance, might tell the story of a filmmaker arriving in a town to make a documentary. Around 1920, however, emerged what was to become one of the 'golden rules' of fiction and documentary film alike: that no-one within the screen space should look directly at the camera. For a documentary or fictional subject to gaze out of the confines of the onscreen reality would uncomfortably remind the viewer of their own position as observer, destroying the illusion that they were party to an unmediated reality. Documentaries were to be 'distillations of truth, transcending the human agencies that

produced them'; observational documentary, obscuring the historical or ideological origins of its creator, masqueraded as an unmediated 'window on the world'. [25] This same logic of the invisible, ideologically neutral yet authoritative observer underpins both MacCabe's metalanguage (see ch. 3) and Burch's institutional mode of representation (see above).

The authoritative revelation performed by the cinematic eye/I was, and is, symptomatic of the cultural foregrounding of individual agency. In Western philosophy, the self-sufficient, coherent and rational Cartesian subject performs a cognitive separation of his corporeal and spiritual organism from the world around him, which is seen and understood as a reality 'distinct' from his own being. This separation, argues Josef Estermann, is linked to Western societies' privileging of vision as an index to knowledge of the objective world. Western culture measures truth by the amount or quality of evidence seen. The most valued forms of knowledge are those codified (for instance into written form) and available to be consulted and interpreted by the individual; hence the historical importance given to book and video libraries. [26] Andean thought, on the other hand, privileges other senses such as touch, smell and hearing; 'the *runa* "feels" reality more than they "know" or "think" it' (Estermann 1998: 102).[27] Science and knowledge are contained less within authoritative texts than in the *yachay*, the collective 'knowledge-and-experience' accumulated and transmitted through generations via myth, ritual and custom. Knowledge is not the result of individual intellectual effort but of the lived past and present experience of the community. In Andean philosophy, explains Estermann, 'the individual as such is a "nothing" (a "non-

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[25] David MacDougall, 'Unprivileged camera style' [1982], in 1998: 199-208. Above quotations: 202.

[26] Javier Sanjinés (2004: 27-28) argues a similar point in his discussion of European and Aymara rationality, pointing out the prevalence of surveillance in Western society. This 'single-eyed' logic is juxtaposed with the Aymara philosophical praxis of 'seeing with two eyes'.

[27] *Runa* is the Quechua term for 'man' or 'human being', used by Quechua-speakers (and by Estermann) to refer to people of pre-Hispanic origin, as opposed to the *misti* (*mestizos*) and the *wiraqocha* (whites). See Estermann 1998: 56.

being"), something totally lost, if s/he is not inserted within a network of multiple relations' (Estermann 1998: 97-98).[28]

This is where the visual and narrative irony of *La nación clandestina* comes into play, for by focusing on an individual (Sebastián), it simultaneously appeals to a 'Westernised' audience accustomed to 'seeing' the world through the eyes of a main individual protagonist, and suggests that it is that same individual perspective that causes his alienation from the community (thereby preventing him from participating with a political voice on a national level). Yet on another level, the logic of the integral sequence shot would appear to obey the same logic of visuality that underpins Western perspectivism: the viewer is seduced by 'seeing' the space of the *altiplano* through the all-encompassing camera's eye. Rodríguez and Silva's 'documentary' films *Campesinos* and *Nuestra voz* are as discursively and rhetorically powerful as the 'fictional' ones of Sanjinés, yet at moments the metalinguistic authority of the camera eye/I is ruptured and brought into play.

Campesinos, made over the first half of the 1970s, charts the rise of the increasingly influential Colombian peasant movement, the ANUC (see ch. 3). Like *Nuestra voz*, it rejects institutionalised 'official history' in favour of the lived history of the silenced masses. Like the Ukamau Group's films it denounces 'national' values as the exclusionary pretence of a colonised elite; the role of the film is to rescue the 'true' cultural values of the people. As with Sanjinés' films of the 1970s, the oppressed are defined in terms of social class:

> In the official cultural institutions they talk about rescuing national values, but they're seen in an abstract sense, as if the culture of the exploiter and that of the exploited were a coherent whole. There's also a landowners' literature, a literature that's consistent with the bourgeois landowning class, and there are also cultural expressions that arise out of the people, alongside their struggles. Those cultural separations are in themselves expressing a need to fight; they're what we are mainly trying

[28] For an analysis of Andean notions of rationality and relationality, see Estermann (1998: 85-135). See Schiwy (2002) for a discussion of these issues in relation to indigenous video-making in the Andes.

> to rescue. It's a critical recuperation of culture, not the recuperation of a culture taken as something without contradictions.[29]

Like the Ukamau Group, Silva and Rodríguez saw the celluloid film as just one part of a wider process of research, communication, documentation and collaboration with their subjects/protagonists; the film was not seen as a definitive and marketable product but a fluid stage for debate. *Campesinos* explores rural violence in Tequendama (Cundinamarca) since the 1930s, analysing the exploitative relations between coffee-growing agro-industrialists and landless or smallholding peasants, and the consequent rise of peasant and agrarian unions. The film was originally conceived as the opening part of a trilogy on the *Violencia*, the bloody civil conflict that engulfed (mainly rural) Colombia during much of the 1940 and 1950s, and Silva and Rodríguez, along with sociologist Arturo Alape, set out to the field to interview the peasant participants in that history. They were committed to portraying this episode from the national story from a decidedly anti-hegemonic, bottom-up and localised perspective, while contextualising the peasants' micro-narratives into a wider political discourse. Yet in the film itself the national analytical framework of the *Violencia* merely simmers in the background; the immediate experiences of the protagonists, and their own modes and frameworks of remembering, take centre stage.

As in *Planas*, the soundtrack is shared between the non-diegetic, 'voice-of-god' comments of the narrators and the words of the interviewees, with increasing prominence given over to the latter. As in the previous film, the relationship between sound and image tracks is constantly shifting between synchronous and asynchronous, and between parallel and contrapuntal.[30] As a result a contemplative distance is opened between the viewer and the filmed 'reality'; the immediate realism of conventional first-

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[29] Jorge Silva, quoted in 'Colombia: la memoria popular' (1977: 19).

[30] Synchronous sound derives from a visible onscreen source – for instance, the lips of a speaking protagonist. Parallel sound and image tracks may not be synchronous, but their 'message' is the same – for instance, a voice-over narrator. Contrapuntal sound and image tracks imply different meanings.

person testimonials is tempered by the enigmatic symbolism of the images upon which Silva's slowly panning camera reflects. The space of the offscreen voice-over narrator, which in observational documentary is the preserve of the omniscient and omnipotent narrator, is often given over to the protagonists, producing a gradual dislocation of authorial power. In one scene an indigenous peasant reads in voice-over the contract forced upon him by the landlord on whose estate he works, cruelly exploiting his labour while forcing him to pledge to defend his master's land against invaders. At the same time the image-track shows the face of an indigenous peasant (who may or may not be the man speaking on the soundtrack) in a striking close-up, silently scrutinising the camera, gazing directly into the lens. 'Who are you,' he seems to be asking, 'to be recording *my* story, my image, with your equipment? What are you going to do with it? Who is going to watch it – what will they think of me?' The camera pans slowly about his body, remaining always in close-up. This scene, though (unlike some scenes in Silva and Rodríguez's films, and unlike *La nación*), does not use a sequence-shot, defined by MacDougall in ethnographic documentary as a 'renunciation of stylistic privilege…[that] attempts to narrow the distance between the person who makes a film and the person who views it' (MacDougall 1998: 205). Instead there are slow cuts from one part of the man's body to the next, pointing out that while the camera may probe a reality, it may never do more than capture fragments of it, and rebuild them, in Benjamin's words, under a new law.

If *Campesinos* set out to be a documentary that would 'see' the history of the *Violencia* from the perspective of those who lived it, over the course of the production of *Campesinos* and *Nuestra voz* the former film's historiographical premise – that charting of a fragment of the larger 'national' history – is partly undermined. In *Campesinos*, many sequences stamp a more vertical control of the filmmakers' discourse over the voices of the protagonists than those discussed above. Here national

institutions are, as in *Nuestra voz*, regarded as colonial impositions, alien from the political, social and cultural reality of the peasants.[31] The paraphernalia of liberal democracy are 'revealed' as strategies aimed at bestowing a veneer of legitimacy on a feudal master/vassal relationship. An indigenous peasant follows the election campaign of the extreme rightwing populist politician Álvaro Gómez (a conservative candidate in the 1974 presidential election), declaring in a matter-of-fact manner that 'you have to vote for whoever the boss says, he gives you what you need for food, for drink, to buy *chicha*'.[32] In the preceding sequence the church is seen to act as Althusser's ideological state apparatus: an image of a Catholic poster proclaiming the 'omnipresence of God' is accompanied by a voice-over denouncing priests who brainwash peasants into following the orders of the oligarchy (Althusser 1971). A montage sequence juxtaposes a still photograph of a peasant boy; an iconic image of the Virgin Mary; a black-hooded hangman; and a Catholic bust of a bloodied and wounded Christ after crucifixion. The metalinguistic message of these sequences is clearly aimed at bringing the peasant viewer to a radical consciousness of the false ideology enshrined in institutionalised norms of national participation. Cuts between marches of the ANUC (the national peasant union) and the CRIC (the specifically indigenous movement based in Cauca) stress the need for coordinated national opposition to an exploitative oligarchic political system.

Looking at *Campesinos* and *Nuestra voz* side by side, though, perhaps more significant is the partial decentring of the *Violencia* itself as a traumatic signifier of common suffering by an imagined *national* community of Colombians, and a foregrounding of the 'longer memory' of the *indigenous* struggle in which the Conquest and colonisation of America has as much contemporary analytical relevance as the

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[31] In this respect *Campesinos* seems closely aligned with the radicalised Marxist wing of the Colombian peasant movement, as discussed in ch. 3.
[32] *Chicha* is a maize-based alcoholic drink originating in indigenous Andean communities.

living memory of Republican-era political feuds.[33] *Nuestra voz* certainly displays a keen desire to revise the traditional top-down versions of the national history, to portray the *Violencia* from the perspective of those who lived it as an everyday reality. The indigenous leader Gustavo Mejía, speaking at a political rally, invokes both Gaitán and the political assassination of liberals during the *Violencia* itself, angrily proclaiming that the Conservative agents of Gaitán's murder 'unleashed a violence that is not written in history books because there has been no-one to write *our* history, to write the *Violencia* as it was!' The following sequence depicts 'national' history as an authoritarian exercise of power through the institutionalisation of knowledge: a ceremony at the Colombian Academy of History celebrates the 'disinterested collaboration' of the Armed Forces in teaching 'national' history in military schools. A long close-up fills the frame with the Academy of History's coat of arms: the idealised national narrative of a completed *mestizaje* embodied in the overlapping figures of an Indian warrior, a conquistador and Liberty.[34] A cut to a long-shot of a rural area filled with soldiers is accompanied by an indigenous man's voice-over, declaring that 'this is why we indigenous people do not know our own history'.

The following scene is shot inside the humble home of an indigenous family listening to the radio; the domineering voice of the announcer proudly announces 12 October as a national holiday, 'the Day of the Discovery of America,...the Day of the Race: a race that no longer exists, since there are barely any Indians left, and those that remain are no more than museum pieces!' Scenes from Bogotá's renowned Gold Museum follow as a tourist takes photographs of gleaming gold sculptures; the museum sign tells us that they are from 'Tierradentro, VII-IX Century AD'. But even as the museum stamps its institutionalising and categorising power on history, and the tourist

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[33] This 'long memory' is linked with the 'two eyes' of race and class through which Bolivian *katarismo* analyses political and historical reality (see ch. 3).

[34] The shield represents 'the three great eras of our history: the aboriginals, Spanish domination and the Republic' (Academia Colombiana de Historia 1972: 57).

makes his own claim to understand and possess that history by mechanically reproducing his own image of the sculptures, an indigenous male voice-over narrates the genocide and pillaging by the conquering Spaniards that lies behind it. This is certainly not a voice from a completed past that has now given way to present national harmony, as the forces of state-sanctioned historiography might lead us to believe. The critical understanding of history is intimately linked to current forces of anti-indigenous repression: the following shot shows, reportage-style, a lorry-load of soldiers alighting in an indigenous community, ready to continue the work of their conquistador forefathers. Within this wider narrative of 500 years of repression, the *Violencia* is but one episode; it exists alongside the Conquest as the cultural, historical and political motivation for present-day struggle.

The crucial point here is that in *Nuestra voz*, history is not, as in Western historiography, a matter of classifying, sealing off and controlling the past, but a conduit for holding power in the present and changing the future. The film, unlike those of Sanjinés, is politically committed to a specific, indigenous political movement; in a sense it embodies the CRIC's project to 'see the past politically, to think the present historically' ('Nuestra voz...' 1982: 6). The narration of history and the 'recuperation' of indigenous myth are not mere background music for the ongoing struggles for land; they are an integral *part* of a single political-historical project. As Jorge Silva realised during the filming of *Campesinos*,

> this is not a struggle on the level of the superstructure, of values, it's not an isolated struggle about culture...but rather culture is defended only on the basis of a very concrete form of defence, such as the recuperation of land, the fight for the material base. The defence of culture is filtered through political struggle, there's an interaction between them.[35]

Nuestra voz foregrounds non-written narrative modes at the expense of the Colombian History Academy's Eurocentric version of history, while neither suggesting

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[35] 'Colombia: la memoria popular' (1977: 19).

that writing is *inherently* alien to indigenous culture (thereby essentialising that culture in a fixed, unchanging past) nor claiming to transparently convey the 'world-view' of its Coconuco, Paez and Guambiano protagonists. Like Sanjinés' integral sequence shot, I would argue, the power of *Nuestra voz* to a great extent relies on visual seduction. But unlike *La nación*, it enters into dialogue with the validity of its own process of mediating between indigenous culture and celluloid.[36] *Nuestra voz* harks back to Flaherty's faith in the ultimate authenticity of the filmed empirical reality. But it also shares some of the concerns of Vertov, the other 'totemic ancestor' of ethnographic film whose formalist and politically radical experiments emphasise the materiality of the cinematic medium while retaining a certainty about the political reality that can be constructed through the film-act.[37] Like Sanjinés' earlier documentary *El coraje del pueblo*, *Nuestra voz* alternates filmic idioms, such as testimonial interviews, montage sequences and fictionalised reconstructions. But rather than blending them into a coherent, expositional whole, it uses contrapuntal sound and image-tracks, jarring cuts and non-naturalistic cinematic devices that constantly juxtapose disparate historical moments and events, associate objects that are matched by both graphic *and* causal association, and remind the viewer of their own role in assembling a reality.

Writing on the irruption of written culture into America with the arrival of the Europeans, Martin Lienhard describes the Spaniards' 'fetishisation of writing' (not the presence of writing itself) as the first major trauma that indigenous peoples underwent. In indigenous cultures history was predominantly oral, collective and fluid: it was narration, 'thought in movement' (Lienhard 1992: 38). European writing, on the other hand, fixed meaning down, recorded and conserved it for posterity, stamped its

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[36] I refer to dialogue *within* the text, rather than during production about the methodological approach to the creation of the text. Sanjinés, like Rodríguez and Silva, has always held constant dialogue with his protagonists, making the whole film-event a process rather than a completed product.

[37] Jean Rouch traces ethnographic film back to the heritage of these two filmmakers. For MacDougall, Flaherty's was a 'cinema of duration', while Vertov's films employed what he terms 'synthesis', 'taking their temporal and spatial structures more from the perceptual psychology of the observer than from structures of the events being filmed' (2003: 115).

immanent authority over the imprecision of oral narratives. However the concept of storing information in codified form *did* exist in Quechua cultures in such forms as the *kipu*, a series of vertical coloured threads knotted onto a horizontal rope. The *kipu* were graphic rather than linguistic: they held no direct relationship to particular phonemes, and only through the interpretation of the *kipukamayuq*, a skilled interpreter, did they convey their message; each interpretation therefore depended heavily on the literary subjectivity of the narrator. They were, says Lienhard, 'mnemo-technical devices for the conservation/reproduction of verbal discourses' (1992: 36): they were used mainly to archive social practices, while philosophising or conjecturing about the future were left largely to the oral sphere.

I will not make any grand claim here that Rodríguez and Silva's film is a cinematic *kipu*, nor that as anthropologists they had any privileged understanding of pre-Columbian systems of linguistic codification. But there are similarities between their indigenising appropriation of the cinematic medium in *Nuestra voz* and indigenous historiography. This is not pure coincidence, since their anthropological study of the Cauca Indians coincided with the CRIC's political project, that was deeply immersed in a 'writing back in time' of a great indigenous history, accessing the knowledge of pre-Columbian times via the texts of such indigenous figures such as the early 20th century intellectual and political leader Manuel Quintín Lame, and the 18th century *cacique* Don Juan Tama.[38] Joanne Rappaport, in her study of the politics of memory among the Paez Indians of the Cauca region, describes much non-Western historiography as a complex narrative encompassing mythic images or metaphors:

> Mythic vehicles frequently overshadow events themselves, making it difficult for us to locate them in time and in space...Historicity is not lodged in a static text, but in an ongoing process of interpretation whereby accounts are constantly assembled and re-assembled...Their creators juxtapose time-frames, omitting causal explanation, refraining

[38] For a fascinating case study in indigenous use of colonial Spanish texts, see Digges and Rappaport (1993), discussed later in this chapter.

> from narrating events in linear form, or locating them outside of chronological time. (Rappaport 1990: 10-11)

Through its narrative structure and cinematic language, *Nuestra voz* seeks constantly to defer fixed meaning. It calls for repeated and different interpretations; places myth on the same ontological level as linear history; presents itself less as the conveyor (or creator) of a 'truth' than as a more or less fragmented repository of memories, arguments and histories. The methodological influence of European currents of filmmaking such as *cinéma vérité* is clear, but the urge to defer fixity of meaning owes much too to the 'logic' of indigenous historiography.

In a sequence near the beginning of the film, Julián Avirama relates in voice-over the myth of La Huecada, which Silva and Rodríguez first encountered being told among the *terrajeros* of the Canaan estate.[39] It is an orally-transmitted myth inherited over countless generations that roots its narrators in a millennial community tradition, but here it is catapulted into both a communal religious consciousness *and* a political analysis of the present. The sequence is a reconstruction of the myth, but rather than setting its stall entirely in the 'reality' of what is recorded on the sound and image-tracks (the Indians' and professional actors' enactment), it performs a reflective analysis drawing on a wide range of historical, political and cultural materials beyond the diegesis.

As Avirama begins to narrate the myth the camera pans around his home in a realist documentary style firmly rooted in the present. But the ensuing sequence, the acted reconstruction of the La Huecada myth, combines stylised mise-en-scène, blurred rapid pans, extreme camera angles, montage editing and discordant, abstract wind music (rather than the naturalistic Andean pipe music employed elsewhere).[40] The story tells

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[39] *Terrajeros* are Indian peons who pay a *terraje*: a tax, paid through monthly labour to landowners in return for being allowed to live and work on their land. Rejection of this exploitative practice was central to the CRIC's establishment and growth in the 1970s.

[40] The non-indigenous roles in this sequence were played by professional actors from the Cali Experimental Theatre Group.

of a community elder, now dead, who went out in search of some lost cattle, and eventually found them tied up in a corral on a mountaintop. They had been abducted by a composite figure comprising the Devil; the landowner; the estate foreman, sporting chaps and spurs; and the Colombian mounted police. Avirama himself, whom we recognise from the 'documentary' parts of the film, is one of the two men who play the part of the elder-narrator, emphasising the relevance of the past myth to the political present. The cinematography tends to place the protagonists of the scene at the centre of the frame, but without removing them from their geographical backdrop, the austere, foggy highlands of the Caucan Andes. As the two men ride on horseback across a plain they pass the camera in close-up, which pans left to re-centre them. The camera then remains motionless, watching them slowly recede into the distance in extreme long-shot, before they disappear altogether into the mist, leaving the viewer to contemplate the landscape's role in the story. Geographical space exists both prior to and as a constituent part of the history being narrated here. It is not, as in the Hollywood western, a transcendent and timeless wilderness to be charted, tamed and controlled (Shohat and Stam 1994: 114-121). As Rappaport comments, in Andean cultures 'history is encoded in physical space, and geography does more than carry important historical referents: it also organises the manner in which…facts are conceptualised, remembered and organised into a temporal framework' (Rappaport 1990: 11).

The dramatised reconstruction is interspersed with montage inserts, accompanied by ominous surges of percussion and wind on the soundtrack, linking Avirama's story with traumatic images from the Conquest. As the men ride up towards the hollow a close-up still image is inserted of a horse's hoof on a bronze statue of a conquistador featured in an earlier sequence; as the men approach the corral we are shown, in rapid succession, further details from the statue, moving from medium-shot, to medium-long-shot, to long-shot. Moments later the 'devil' character appears for the

first time sporting a grotesque mask; a close-up of his hand grasping his horse reminds us of the conquistador's statue. Then, in an intense exchange of eyeline matches, the camera pans, tracks and cuts between the terrified looks of the men and the devil figure gazing from behind his mask. The shots of the men's eyes grow closer; a menacing, low-angle track forwards towards the devil sets him towering over them. A series of extremely rapid pans left takes us from the devil to the landowner to the foreman, seemingly in contiguous space. Almost abstract extreme-close-ups of the men's eyes are now cross-cut, using eyeline matches, to details from the statue: the men are literally 'seeing', or 'experiencing', the devil's various guises alongside the colonial invasion, and its enshrining within national history.

In working screenings of their previous film *Campesinos*, Rodríguez and Silva had found that when, for instance, a man spoke alone in the frame to an unseen interviewer, indigenous audiences found the scene absurd since the man was seemingly talking to nobody. As Marta Rodríguez explained, 'the Indian needs a collective 'I'' (see Hervo 1980: 6). Yet rather than converting the Indians' notion of spatio-temporal integrity into a new metalanguage, Silva and Rodríguez (constantly supervised by a delegation of overseers from the CRIC) seized cinema's grammatical capacity to fragment and link multiple temporal and spatial planes, and adapted it to the cultural, narrative and political needs of the Cauca Indians. The men's 'seeing' in the sequence described above is not a distanced Western objectification of reality, but a simultaneous experience of various historical moments. The use of montage seemingly embodies not so much the external 'perceptual psychology of the observer' identified by MacDougall in Vertov's cinema (or that used in Sanjinés' short *Revolución*: see ch. 2), as the 'mythical framework' of Andean historiography that 'reflect[s] mental structures more than temporal process' – which, 'by stressing the repetitive structure of historical process,...link[s] the past to the future, providing a template for understanding where

we came from, but also where we are going' (Rappaport 1990: 12 and 16). Moreover the film avoids the essentialising suggestion that this understanding of history is by any means a pure and universal Andean conception or somehow indexical of a truthful 'understanding' of events. At the end of his narrative Avirama expresses his own scepticism as to whether the story actually 'happened' just as he narrates it:

> That was an elder who went up there, he's dead now. It was him that used to tell the story...Because, of course...I've got evidence that it happened, but that's the way our ancestors used to tell us that that's the form that the devil appeared in. But I mean...I haven't heard anything...I haven't got any evidence that it happened, I've never chosen to hear or see these things people hear that shock them, I don't believe in malign things. Since I was small my mum and dad said to me 'there could be a devil...' but that's just for those who choose to see it or hear it. Those who want to see it see it, those who don't...well, they don't. If there's a devil in this world, well I don't think he's among us, because, I mean, that's a rich man's business. It's nothing to do with us, we've only just begun organising.[41]

As Silva and Rodríguez found across the entire Cauca region, and as the importance laid on the reconstruction by Avirama and his companions suggest,[42] the importance of the myth lies not in its verifiable 'reality' but in the way in which, as a communal understanding of history, it can be harnessed in order to change the political present. Elsewhere in the film, non-rational explanations of events are similarly presented neither as straight documentary fact nor, in orthodox Marxist tradition, as superstitious elements to be extirpated from an otherwise inherently progressive populus. Later on the devil reappears in the Industria Puracé sulphur mine as part of a process of coming to terms with the deaths of a number of miners. An indigenous miner equates the devil with the *gringos* who 'are very blond and smell strongly of sulphur...[they] only come to our country to exploit us'. The camera again hunts down extreme framings and angles: an extreme close-up of the *gringo*'s eye gives way to a slow pan along the strange, fair hairs of his arm; a brief montage sequence of extreme

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[41] Avirama's version of the La Huecada myth, as narrated in this sequence of *Nuestra voz*, is transcribed in 'Nuestra voz...', *Arcadia va al cine* (1982): 8.

[42] In ibid: 11-12, Silva tells of the intense level of collaboration between themselves and the Canaan estate Indians in the production of this reconstruction.

close-ups fetishises his menacing eyes and fair skin. A dissonant clash on the soundtrack shores up a striking reversal of ethnographic convention: the 'Western' outsider is portrayed as grotesque, inhuman and Other, inexplicably taking the lives of miners to fulfil his cabalistic pact with the devil. The indigenous man, in contrast, is natural and rational, searching for explanation of an unfathomable reality. Echoing the La Huecada myth, the explanation for the devil's presence is a pact with the *gringos* who own the mine: his supernatural powers are lined up alongside the inherently *ir*rational workings of multinational capital. Again, the miner's testimony that pervades the soundtrack takes myth far beyond the realm of superstition, acting rather as a logical rationale for solidifying political solidarity between indigenous peasants and miners:

> Of course, it's more than evident that the devil doesn't exist in the flesh, but we do know that there's a metaphysics, to fight against the whole range of elements, even the forces of nature itself, which act against the people. So the only way to solve these kinds of problems is for the people to organise a little more, because unity is strength, isn't it? So when we're organised we can defeat not only the *gringos* but also we can try and keep control of the supernatural forces that are prevailing at the moment.

The meaning of myth is multifaceted, adaptable and politically charged. The people in *Nuestra voz* speak not with the reductive, unitary 'single voice' suggested by the title but with a multiplicity of individual visions and interpretations that nevertheless are broadly united by a common set of cultural precepts and political goals. As Rivera asserts, indigenous mythic and oral history replaces the linear narration of 'documentary history' with 'long time periods [...] in which what matters is not "what happened" but why it happened and who was right'. It is 'a privileged space to uncover deep perceptions about the colonial order, [...] in spite of the changes of government, of the diverse mechanisms of domination and neutralisation, it uncovers the long historical constants, embodied in colonial reality' (1987: 58-59).

At the end of the La Huecada story Julián Avirama hints at the political rationality of the myth, and the role that it, and *Nuestra voz* itself, might have in the concrete struggles of the CRIC. The La Huecada myth emerged as a way of explaining the exploitative relations between landowners and *terrajeros* in the region: the presence of the devil figure, in league as he is with the landowner, the *carabineros* (mounted police), the multi-national capitalists and the conquistadores, was also part of the explanation of the indigenous community's fear at reclaiming the land that rightfully belonged to their *resguardo*.[43] The scene following Avirama's myth documents the seven demands of the CRIC's campaign, including an end to the feudal forced labour system of *terraje*, still in place in parts of Cauca; a recuperation of *resguardo* land (granted to indigenous communities in the eighteenth century by royal charter); the strengthening of the *cabildo* authorities than govern them; and a defence and awareness of indigenous history, land and customs (see CRIC 1981).

The centrality of women to the remembrance, continuity and ongoing activation of cultural memory and ancestral mythic belief in the Andes is well-documented, and there is no space here to elaborate on this further (Rivera 1997a; Rivera 1997b; Arnold ed. 1997; Feder 1999; Arnold and Yapita 2000).[44] *Nuestra voz*'s prolonged attention to its female interviewees adds another dimension to its multi-layered defence of Andean cultural resistance. In *El coraje del pueblo*, we may recall, the scenes of the activist stance taken by the housewives' committee demonstrated the crucial role of female agency: not in seeking a gender-specific movement of emancipation in opposition to a *machista* culture, but in guaranteeing that a female angle on class and racial oppression has a stake in the liberation struggle. Throughout *Nuestra voz*, as in many of

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[43] *Resguardos*, often glossed wrongly as 'reservations', are communally held lands owned by indigenous communities and were administered by local elected authorities (*cabildos*) that were granted to indigenous communities through colonial or nineteenth-century Republican land titles (Rappaport 1990: 190).

[44] See also Raquel Romero's film *Voces de libertad/Voices of Freedom* (1990) and Silvia Rivera's film *Sueño en el cuarto rojo/Dream in the Red Chamber* (1998).

Rodríguez's documentaries, a similar function is served by the narrative thread provided by several women who speak to the interviewer, often while performing female-identified daily chores. One woman complains of her husband's drunkenness: not only because of the damaging effect it has on private family relations, but also because 'we need to struggle, since we don't have anywhere to work'. The following scene shows another woman attributing the death of her brother to an 'evil wind' (which was also one of the explanations for the disappearance of the cattle in the La Huecada myth). She tells how her brother arrived home drunk and dropped dead: as she wonders whether he might have been poisoned the image-track cuts between images of a poison bottle; a church; the hanging foetus of a dead reptile; the foreman/devil figure; the Andean mountains bathed in mist. The image-track does not drown out her words in univocal symbolism but rather hints at a variety of interpretations: she can offer no certain interpretation of the reason for her brother's death, but then neither can the scientific analysis of the film text.

It is also female lucidity that provides the final thoughts at the film's end: 'one day, the day will come for us to organise more, against all their crimes, all they have done'. At the same time the camera pans across her in close-up as she labours over a manual grinding machine; her words act as a sound-bridge over a cut to the interior of her home as she leafs through a collection of political pamphlets published by the CRIC. While *Coraje* ultimately heroises public triumphalism, its final scene depicting the masses of Siglo Veinte marching towards victory, *Nuestra voz* ends on a more circumspect note that emphasises the central role of the female-identified private sphere in bringing society forward: female labour, education and literacy. The women who provide *Nuestra voz*'s narrative thread offer a political lucidity that forms an integral part of the film's (and the CRIC's) attempts to forge an understanding of their struggle in terms of both public *and* domestic relations dependent upon race, social class, and

gender. Concrete political struggles for land are tightly interwoven with both quotidian tasks and the recuperation of cultural identity. In turn cultural identity is necessarily flexible, non-specific and contradictory, allowing for localised or individual interpretations according to circumstance.[45]

The marvellous and the diglossic: models of cultural interaction

Nuestra voz's use of indigenous myth as a structuring narrative device is, for Jorge Silva, a guarantor not only of its authentic grasp of the truly 'national' character, but it also implicitly gives the filmmakers themselves the right to claim a part of the New Latin American Cinema's sense of continental, revolutionary originality (see ch. 1 above). In a 1984 conference paper he decried Colombian filmmakers' failure to provide 'a cinema that allows [its audience] to identify as a nation, as a culture, as what we are, what we are not, what we are looking for' (Silva 1988: 19). Both here and elsewhere he seeks to locate the narratives of the Coconuco, Guambiano and Paez protagonists of *Nuestra voz* within a wider intellectual framework that suggests Latin America's inherent opposition to the Western rationality that underpins capitalism and neocolonial domination. He cites Alejo Carpentier's notion of the 'marvellous real':

> I found, in the everyday reality of Latin America, the marvels of a syncretic world, of a world in which I found, in a live and brute state, everything that the surrealists, it must be said, all too often fabricated through their own artifice' (Bello and Bernal 1982: 7).
> It's a syncretism that covers so many walks of life: the ethnic, the religious, the artistic, the sociological, the history of America, a syncretism that lies at the very heart of our *mestizaje*, for here in America, the unusual is everyday, it was always everyday, free, and decolonised (Silva 1988: 20).[46]

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[45] On a similar note Goldman (1993) argues that Rodríguez and Silva's subsequent film *Amor, mujeres y flores* (1990) is not feminist in the North American sense, but rather depicts feminist issues as inseparable from class struggle.

[46] On *Nuestra voz*'s release the renowned Colombian film critic Luis Alberto Álvarez wrote that 'in a country whose literary supplements harp on endlessly about "magic" or "magical realism", *Nuestra voz de tierra* is the first truly magical film. In a [national] cinema in which the indigenous has been cunningly used to such insipid effect by tedious *sobreprecio* shorts, the film by these two Colombian directors is the only worthy one, the only one that can be taken seriously, the only indigenous film'. He also compares *Nuestra voz* favourably with Jorge Sanjinés' films, which he describes as 'simplistic and paternalistic' for their recourse to primitive narrative devices (Álvarez 1996: 105).

In the same way that *El reino de este mundo* (Carpentier 1967) portrayed 'native superstition' (in European rationality's terms) as lived reality, *Nuestra voz* takes the 'unusual', 'magical' dimensions of indigenous myth and presents them as a real, lived relationship with the political and economic structures of Colombian society. In Carpentier's novel the slave revolt leader Mackandal is simultaneously burnt at the stake *and* ascends into the sky, juxtaposing rational and non-rational experiences of the same event as competing realities, rather than privileging one interpretation as being objectively 'true'. Yet by describing *El reino de este mundo* as an exemplar of a 'marvellous' reality, Carpentier by definition presupposes an interpretive external perspective: a belief is only 'marvellous' for those who do not believe in its truth. Similarly, just as *indigenismo* has often tended to privilege indigenous visions while retaining European rationality as the normative term (see ch. 2 above), Silva's statement appears to appropriate the mythic reality of *Nuestra voz*'s protagonists for a national and continental vision of a *mestizo*, inherently anti-imperialist reality.

Silva and Rodríguez can thus claim a similar mantle of originality to the boom novelists who had emerged onto the world stage less than two decades previously, who 'gave the impression that nothing really notable really preceded them in Latin America' (Sommer 1990: 71-72). *Nuestra voz*, as a product of the formally and politically revolutionary New Latin American Cinema, is announced with the same pioneering bravura as the modernist-inspired, iconoclastic boom generation who, for Sommer, embraced 'a demotion, or defusion, of authorial control and tireless formal experimentation' that was symptomatic of a generation bent on disavowing the positivist legacy of their forebears. For Silva and Rodríguez as for the boom writers, indigenous culture could be comfortably taken on board, since the 'positive reality' they rejected 'was traditionally opposed to magic; otherwise the proto-Boom style of magic

realism would represent no new departure' (Sommer 1990: 71-72).[47] Furthermore, the inherently syncretic nature of America also allows Silva to claim that *Nuestra voz* does not depart from a 'naturalistic' approach to documentary, implying that their reading of that reality is a neutral one, in absolute accord with the beliefs of their protagonists (Bello and Bernal 1982: 7).

Some of Jorge Sanjinés' comments with regard to *La nación clandestina* might be seen as equally co-optive. On its Bolivian release in 1989 the film unleashed a tidal wave of debate in the national press – much of it less concerned with the film per se than with the issues it raised regarding the nature of national identity. Bolivia was just seven years into a period of relatively stable liberal democracy after the brutal dictatorship of García Meza, and mainstream national politics was (not unlike the post-1952 period) seeking a renewed legitimacy among the masses, through a humanist discourse of cultural pluralism and indigenous participation in the state and civil society. Parts of the Ukamau Group's press-book for *La nación clandestina*, with Sanjinés evoking an 'organic' and 'tolerant' nation, read almost like a vindication of this assimilationist attitude, albeit with strong emphasis on the historic oppression of the indigenous, and the positive values of their culture (Sanjinés 1990; also see above). Indeed, the prominence given to the film in the national press (largely produced and consumed by people who would identify as *mestizo* or creole) suggests that it was received in many quarters as a pretext to continue and refine an ongoing debate about the new, multicultural national identity, rather than a reflection on how indigenous politics might unite with the radical left in order to bring about sweeping social change.[48]

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[47] Rodríguez claimed in an interview with a French film magazine that there was really no cinema in Colombia before 1966, once Sanjinés had already made a feature and *La hora de los hornos* had already been made (Hervo, 1980).

[48] Of course, such statements by Sanjinés may well be a stratagem to achieve a wider audience for his film. Elsewhere he has insisted that *Nación* is no less political than his previous films, since 'there is no cultural reality without political connotation' ('Jorge Sanjinés habla de La nación clandestina' 1991: 17).

Even so, I would argue that both *Nación* and *Nuestra voz* are, like Carpentier's novel, somewhat more astute than the pronouncements their 'authors' made in their wake. In Silva and Rodríguez's film the camerawork, the editing, and the interweaving complex of contrapuntal relations between sound and image tend to subordinate rather than privilege the exoticising external eye. Sanjinés' movie analyses the specific dilemma of Aymara Bolivians caught between acculturation to 'national' society and cultural and political resistance through defence of the values of the *ayllu*. For many viewers, including those aligned with Sanjinés' own political perspective, *Nación* far surpasses liberal multiculturalism, which envisages different ethnicities cohabiting on a level social playing-field, dramatising as it does a vision of cultural interaction that has far more regard for the colonial roots of political power.

In both films, the interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous spheres might best be defined via Martin Lienhard's notion of 'cultural diglossia': a subtler model of encounter than the homogenising concepts of *mestizaje* and assimilation, or the polarising notions of acculturation and resistance (Lienhard 1997). In a culturally diglossic analysis, indigenous cultural forms (norm 'B') are not fully incorporated into the dominant, Hispanic culture (norm 'A'), but neither do they exist in a 'pure' form, manifested in dualistic opposition to the hegemonic norm. Rather norms A and B co-exist, tightly bound to one another but with norm A exercising power and authority over norm B. For Lienhard, for instance, in a situation of religious diglossia between 'official' Spanish Christianity and Andean popular religion, what matters is

> neither "resistance" or assimilation", nor the employment of syncretic ritual forms, but rather the choice, in each situation or concrete proposition, of the most adequate practice. The alternation of "official" and "unofficial" practices by marginal sectors, an attitude of "relative resistance", denotes its strategic intelligence (1997: 195).

Even so, if official Christianity takes on motifs from popular religion its underlying 'grammatical' structure does not change. On the other hand, 'lacking a

central guardian of its principles, the practices of norm "B"...are transformed more or less deeply in its dialogue with other practices of the same norm and those of norm "A"' (Lienhard 1997: 196). In a festival celebration in La Paz, Sebastián proudly tells a friend that he has changed his surname from the Aymara 'Mamani' to the English-sounding 'Maisman', signalling his rejection of his indigenous heritage and seduction by the 'Western' values of the city. Ironically he is decked out in the garb of one of Bolivia's countless syncretic folkloric dances that are both a part of present-day national folklore *and* a ritual acting-out of the unequal encounter and struggle between pre-Columbian and Hispanic cultures. *La nación*'s relevance to Bolivian 'national' society perhaps lies in its dramatisation of the daily negotiations people make between indigenous and non-indigenous identities. At the same time it recognises that to lean towards 'Western' culture, at least in the city, brings with it a greater social prestige that is the result of the economic, political and cultural power of the West, and of its surrogates of the national elite.

According to Marta Rodríguez, the Caucan indigenous videomaker Antonio Palechor spent some years taking a copy of *Nuestra voz* about the region by donkey and bicycle, screening it in indigenous communities as a basis for forums and debates, before resolving himself to make films (see Gómez 1996: 99). *Nuestra voz* was certainly a touchstone in the emergence of the indigenous video movement in Colombia, and excerpts from various Silva and Rodríguez films appear 'quoted' in a number of indigenous videos: *Así nos organizamos* (prod. CRIC, 1996), for instance, uses montage inserts of the conquistador statue's spurs from *Nuestra voz* to underline a Caucan Indian's explanation of indigenous history to a younger generation. Even if we do accept that Sanjinés and Silva/Rodríguez to a certain extent employed the "magic" of indigenous culture for their politically revolutionary and aesthetically modernist ends, we should regard it less as an appropriation than as a creative meeting of cultural

spheres. The filmmakers' committed, democratising methodologies did not make the power relationship between filmmaker and subject dissolve into the ether, but it did make for an important set of negotiations between them, both in the practical aspects of production, distribution and exhibition, and in the textual functioning of the films. Both *La nación* and *Nuestra voz*, I would argue, engage with the traumatic yet productive encounter between autochthonous Andean and colonising Hispanic/North American cultures. Yet rather than treating the Andean as a folkloric leftover of a bygone era, they try to lift it out of its subaltern 'norm B' space, forging out of it a hegemonic will to overcome the cultural and political dominance of the metropolitan paradigm.

On a final note, we should take care to avoid the Eurocentric stance that Andean culture and historiography (the norm B of diglossic interaction) is *inherently* oral and traditional; that the millennial culture they promote is spontaneously regenerated by word of mouth from one generation to the next; or that the written form (deriving from norm A) is necessarily alien, or 'imposed' upon the Indians. Rappaport has shown that Paez history is not simply 'a continuous application of constant patterns arising from the collectivity' but rather 'a constant clash of innovation and tradition mediated by key individuals who reappropriate patterns they have acquired from written sources' (1990: 188). Indigenous oral culture is not opposed to textuality; rather is mediated by sacred texts that, not unlike *kipus*, hold a ritual index to historical truth, but whose authority (unlike the Western text) lies as much in the particular narrator's decoding of it as it does in the text itself. Rather than being set in stone, they are amenable to transformation and innovation; oral narrative 'presents an advantage over the European-derived written form, because it limits quick and enveloping hierarchical control' (Rappaport 1990: 185). Similarly, Digges and Rappaport (1993) show that the land titles on which indigenous communities in the Colombian Andes base their claims to their communal *resguardo* lands are themselves products of colonial rule. They argue

that even in the colonial era (when the written word was first 'fetishised' in America), in the eyes of Cumbal Indians the written titles gained legitimacy only when linked to a regularly performed possession ceremony in which the *resguardo* members walked the boundaries of their land. So when, in a scene from *Nuestra voz*, an Indian leader bears aloft the title of the land that 'rightly' belongs to the *resguardo*, the ensuing land invasion becomes more than a mere occupation of workable territory in the economic interests of the material base, or a strike for indigenous oral memory against the oppressive written word of the invader. It becomes rather the reactivation of an assertive ancestral negotiation between indigenous community and state politics; between oral memory and fetishised written history. Cultural identity, following Stuart Hall's second model outlined in the opening pages of this chapter, is firmly rooted in social and political history. The elements of the past that lend coherence to the community's sense of self are the same values that participate in the advancement of its present political agenda, strategically adapting themselves to immediate political concerns.

No in-depth study yet exists of the reception and consumption of these films in indigenous communities, but such a work could throw much light on the impact that these particular encounters between revolution and *pachakuti* have had on indigenous notions of anti-hegemonic struggle. Indeed, European and North American academic studies of cinema in recent years have shown that film audiences do not necessarily react in the manner of the 'ideal spectator' implied in much of the 1970s film theory discussed in these pages. A study of indigenous spectatorship might also help us to understand the extent to which specific cultural codes have led films' 'obvious messages' to be interpreted differently, or incorporated into other modes of knowledge. In short, it might help us understand how important the textual workings of film

language actually are, in relation to the democratisation of production, distribution and exhibition.

The next chapter will focus on films, many of them made in recent years on video or digital formats, which might not stand up to such rigorous textual analyses as those performed here on works such as *Nación* or *Nuestra voz*. Their political strength lies not in their linguistic operations but rather in the innovative ways in which they harness, engage with and subvert the technologies and spaces of film production, distribution and exhibition.

Chapter Five

Post-revolutionary *indigenismos*: from authors to activists

Like many of the films discussed in this thesis made by the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental, the video short *Jach'atatala Jach'amamalan Thakipa/The Pathway of the Souls* (1989) both dramatises and performs indigenous resistance to foreign co-optation and cultural appropriation. Set and filmed in the Bolivian highland community of Coroma in the department of Potosí, *Jach'atatala* (re-)enacts the illicit sale onto the international art market of some of the community's *q'epis*: bundles of sacred garments belonging to and embodying the *ayllus*' founding ancestors, which are consulted for important decisions and events, and ceremonially worn during the annual All Souls' Day celebration by Coroma's inhabitants, who become temporarily inhabited by the souls of their ancestors.[1] Narrated with a non-linear flashback structure, the film hinges on the discovery, through a ritual reading of coca leaves, that a recent period of illness and famine has been visited upon Coroma by its angry *jach'amamas* and *jach'atatas*, who feel lonely since having been removed from their ancestral home.

A close-up on one man attending a village meeting announces a sequence narrating a past episode, in which he is bought off by traders from outside the community wishing to sell some of Coroma's *q'epis* for high prices to collectors in North America. Thanks to the wisdom of the coca leaves, the man is caught and imprisoned by the villagers; and the diegesis concludes with a long sequence documenting the ceremony in which a llama is sacrificed to atone for the missing bundles, and a group of representatives are despatched to North America to reclaim the textiles. The film ends with an unseen indigenous storyteller narrating the subsequent

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[1] The film's opening titles declare that the *q'epis* 'are our life and express our history. They are the power that unite us'.

events: after the community presented a formal complaint to the USA, Canadian and US customs invoked UNESCO cultural heritage laws to seize a large number of illegally imported *q'epis*, and the US and Bolivian governments signed an emergency accord to temporarily prevent the entry of Coroman textiles into the US. According to the film's director Eduardo López, while *Jach'atatala* was not used as a piece of legal evidence in the villagers' court case, it was a key factor in the recovery of eighty textiles.[2]

Like those indigenista films that squared up with the Marxist-inspired New Latin American Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, *Jach'atatala* participates in the indigenous memorialising of a pre-Hispanic communal identity that challenges the historical, social, cultural and political models and narratives of the colonial and Republican Bolivian states. It was, furthermore, made by a leftwing urban, non-indigenous filmmaker (Eduardo López) with the twin goals of raising and consolidating grassroots consciousness and understanding of wider political and economic processes, and directly intervening in political events – in this case, to rescue the *q'epis* from North American art dealers. But unlike, say, *Nuestra voz* or *El enemigo principal*, which set out all too clearly the forces of geopolitical domination that lie behind the events portrayed, here the exoticising and imperialising eye of the *gringos* is present only by implication. Those who plunder Coroma's heritage are indigenous and *mestizo*-identified Bolivians. Quechua-Aymara culture (both languages are spoken in the *ayllus*) is defined not as a reactive strategy, or as a bulwark of national or continental authenticity against external imposition; rather, it is presented on its own terms. Neither here nor in other videos made by López with Bolivian Andean communities (such as *Martín de las Crujías* or *Destinos de tierra*, both 1992) is there a sense of Indian culture

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[2] Conversation with Eduardo López, La Paz, 4 September 2003. See Lobo (1991) for an account of the *q'epis*' function, and their theft from and return to Coroma; and a portfolio of documents published on the website of the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, http://exchanges.state.gov (accessed 8 August 2005). For more general accounts of the role of cloth and textiles in Andean societies, see Murra (1991) and Arnold and Yapita (2000).

as corralled, clinging to survival in the face of imperialism and oppression – or, in Silvia Rivera's words, as 'a majority with the consciousness of a minority' (1997a: 38-42).

The fact that this film focuses on the retrieval of textiles is of more than folkloric significance. As we see in *Jach'atatala,* the community elders access the historiographical, philosophical and religious knowledge stored in the *q'epis* via ritual. In Andean cultures the linguistic and symbolic values of textiles, which give information about the past and advice about the future, are codified both textually through the woven threads and performatively through ritualised social roles and rites of passage (Murra 1991; Arnold and Yapita 2000: 201-238). Whereas the rational Western autonomous subject tends to 'see', delimit and apprehend the world as a separate entity, Andean knowledge 'feels' the world; the skin, rather than a protective layer that separates the body from the world, is a porous layer that communicates between the internal organs and the outside world. Andean notions such as *janchi/kurpu* (body), *yachay / yatiña* (knowledge) and *jaqui* (person) are often expressed in terms of textile-related homologies rather than written or abstract concepts (Arnold and Yapita 2000; Estermann 1998: 85-110). As Arnold and Yapita note, for Andean children knowledge is not so much 'acquired' or 'learnt', as woven into their being: 'it is as though knowledge were one more thread that is tied into the ball of threads (*muruq'u*) that constitutes the heart' (2000: 208-209).

As such the *q'epis*, and textiles more generally, embody a form of recording and relating to the social and historical spheres that differs radically from the written culture that Spanish colonialism brought to the New World, and which today underpins almost every aspect of the state's bureaucratic machinery.[3] Here *q'epis*, repositories of Andean

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[3] Arnold and Yapita (2000: 227) show that the epistemological conflict between traditional Andean and Hispanic bureaucratic communication systems is still very much alive. Girls in many Andean communities are often torn between the conflicting needs to learn to weave (in order to maintain their community's link with the laws and customs of the ancients) and to write (in order to fulfil their duties towards state educational bureaucracies). According to one girl at a secondary school in Challapata, 'as

knowledge, are rescued from middlemen who value them only in terms of financial exchange, and sell them to highbrow Western collectors who amass 'primitive' art in their efforts to 'understand' or 'decode' alien cultures. This enterprise is seemingly motivated by an exotic fascination combined with a simple desire to make a profit, thinly veiled by a paternalistic gesture at giving much-needed aid to impoverished third-world peasants.[4]

If the stolen textiles are co-opted as goods on a highly profitable international market, the campaign to have them returned to Coroma was, perhaps inevitably, surrounded by the terminology of national cultural patrimony (*q'epis* 'form an emblem of national pride in a society that is largely indigenous'), and provided the US government with an opportunity to demonstrate its benevolent defence of the historical legacy of the *mestizo* continent. As one US politician involved in the case commented, 'Bolivia's heritage is integral to the heritage of all the Americas, making it incumbent on us to protect for future generations a cultural legacy in which we all share and for which we are all stewards'.[5] Yet however much the *q'epis* are converted into financial commodities, objects of colonial fascination or national pride, their ceremonial status gives them a processual, constantly performed meaning that – like the *kipus* discussed in Chapter 4 – no amount of reduction or co-optation can quantify or control. Thus they are, in a sense, analogous to the films of the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental, which defined themselves in terms of radical social process and use-value rather than any universal aesthetic appeal they may have had on the international film distribution market (Burton 1997; ch. 1 above). Not unlike those vanguard *indigenista* continentalist films, the *q'epis* in *Jach'atatala* resist being reduced to the status of 'completed', material artistic commodities. López's film not only represents, but

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peasants we know how to spin and weave [...] Then we have to learn to read too and we can't. [...] We can't get along in both [idioms]'. Even thinking about those things makes us feel really dizzy'.

[4] The art dealer Steve Berger, whose house was raided to retrieve the *q'epis*, commented that 'many Coroman goods have been sold from 1978. The Indians are very poor'. Quoted in Booth-Conroy (1992).

[5] Both of the above quotations are taken from http://exchanges.state.gov.

performs, through its insertion into national and international media and legal circuits, the recovery of the *q'epis* on the part of an Andean indigenous community in the face of international capitalism.

However, both López and the indigenous actors with whom he worked (some of whom went on to become *videastas* in their own right) were wary of the grand narratives of liberation professed by many of the films of the New Latin American Cinema. While such films may well have drawn attention to the problematics of, say, indigenous peasants living under oppressive, neocolonised regimes, their tendency to subsume their protagonists into their own interpretive paradigms (such as national liberation or Marxist analysis) may have made them almost as damaging to the communities' sense of cultural selfhood as were the political and economic regimes against which they railed. Even as groups such as the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental strove to break down hierarchical working methodologies, the financial and technical exigencies of the media they used (usually 16mm celluloid film) meant that they could not help stamping their interpretive authority onto the realities they 'captured'. *Jach'atatala*, though, while directed by the outsider López, was shaped and conceived according to the precise needs of the community involved, without taking recourse to wider socio-political explanatory frameworks. It might be more accurate to propose that this video does for textiles what many of the videos conceived, produced and exhibited by indigenous groups throughout the Americas since the mid 1980s aim to do for autochthonous cultural identity in general: to assume active control over a specifically indigenous mode or system of representation that had previously been in the hands of outside interests (*Unidos por una comunicación propia*, 2002; Iván Sanjinés 1998).

The transition from film to video entails or mirrors a shift in methodological, aesthetic and political terms: while lighter, cheaper equipment facilitates the 'transfer'

of technology to the erstwhile (indigenous) 'subject', the shallow depth of field of the video camera encourages a focus on individual rather than collective stories (Schiwy 2003). Radical alterity is constructed out of everyday rather than momentous, macro-political occurrences, placing a greater emphasis on individual or small-scale collective agency than on sweeping proselytising. Yet my discussions here of indigenous filmmakers in Bolivia and Colombia, and subsequently of the La Paz-based anarchist lesbian feminist group Mujeres Creando, will show that while active and activist 'appropriation' of the media certainly achieve some emancipatory aims, perhaps beyond what the Ukamau Group or the Fundación Cine Documental did in the 1960s and 1970s, the inescapable insertion of these groups into culturally hybrid (or *mestizo*) social spheres mean that their cultural expressions are inevitably mediated by the linguistic and institutional structures of those societies.

But this is not to suggest that the mainstream technological and social circuits into which those artists are inserted necessarily devour their work to satisfy late capitalism's hunger for postmodern difference (Jameson 1991). The Brazilian media theorist Arlindo Machado, influenced by Roland Barthes' theory of textuality, follows up some of the emancipatory potential of poststructuralist thought in de-centring the photographer as the producer, or 'author', of the photographic image. He points out that while a photograph is indeed a social and cultural artefact that somehow 'alters' or 'interprets' reality, that alteration depends as much on the vagaries of light, technology, and the subject and consumers of the image as it does on the actual photographer. This means that the artist himself is conceived not as the vanguard creator of images, but as an intermediary between technology and the world, partly shaped by the nature of the former, without renouncing the possibility of altering the latter. In his essay 'Máquina e imaginario' Machado argues that technology, the product of advanced capitalist societies, and artists, who often wish to subvert the mechanisms of such societies, both

exist in an equivocal and mutually dependent relationship (2002: 233-251). On the one hand technology depends on artists to elevate the social status of its inventions (such was the case of photography and cinema), while on the other artists seeking to constantly revolutionise the concept of art depend on technology. Within this dialectical relationship, 'it becomes impossible to stake out the boundaries up to which the artist has contributed to legitimising advanced industrialised society, and from which he has deconstructed it, sabotaging the heart of its own formative paradigms' (Machado 2002: 241).

Machado's model of the artist as intermediary rather than creator also asserts that the recorded image is far from the simple and unmediated 'expression of the concept' (Machado 2002: 39-50). While this notion might be liberating for, say, the subaltern subjects of anthropological documentary, it implies too that simply handing them video cameras is no guarantee of the political efficacy of their results, since to effectively intervene as an oppositional intermediary requires a studied comprehension of the political and cultural mechanisms of the mediated society in which a film intervenes.[6]

The 'democratising' potential of new technologies is thus a complex terrain. What is more, the advent of lighter, cheaper and more accessible equipment and infrastructures for film production and exhibition has roughly coincided in Colombia and Bolivia with the ratification of 'multicultural' constitutions, which have conceded certain rights and privileges to indigenous and other racially subordinate social sectors never before recognised by national society. While these developments have been welcomed by many, they have also been received with some caution by indigenous

[6] The complications of technology transfer has been repeatedly borne out in practice in documentary filmmaking. To cite one recent example, when the Colombian documentarist Carlos Bernal did a filmmaking workshop for peasants in Urabá, he found it extremely hard to coax them away from the idiom of TV soap opera, resulting in a highly superficial image: 'for them to express themselves freely, you have to achieve a more accomplished [trabajada] aesthetic, to carefully establish your relationship with the camera. Not anyone can do that, you need many years of training' (conversation, July 2004).

groups, for as the history of elite *indigenismo* attests, metropolitan proponents of indigenous rights have often proved to be so many more attempts to co-opt indigenous culture or political allegiance into exclusionary or exploitative national projects or discourses. Therefore just as indigenous communicators must develop a keen understanding of the mediatised environment in which their work intervenes, they must acquire a dual consciousness that can both analyse from within the metropolitan society that declares itself to be inclusive, *and* keep sight of their own cultures' values, traditions and political demands, recalling Walter Mignolo's 'border thinker', Joanne Rappaport's 'inappropriate other', or *katarismo*'s 'two-eyed intellectual' (Mignolo 2001; Rappaport 2003; Javier Sanjinés 2004).

What, then, is the role of vanguard intellectuals such as Marta Rodríguez or Jorge Sanjinés in this changing scenario? How have intellectuals addressed the unstable ground beneath their feet as technological developments (at least partly the fruits of Western modernity) have gradually redefined the ways in which political cinema has been produced and consumed? While the modernist anti-imperialist cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s tended to define themselves in opposition to dominant models, indigenous and *indigenista* video tends to strategically tap mainstream infrastructures and discourses in order to further their political ends. On the other hand, I will argue here, its broad refusal to find accommodation with hegemonic notions of taste and aesthetic quality has meant that it has reached far narrower audiences beyond its primary or intended activist circles; although this is not necessarily a problem. It is not the task of this chapter to evaluate whether *videastas*' encounter with the multicultural mainstream constitutes cooptation or appropriation. It is rather, along the lines of Machado's technological artist, to chart some of the territory that lies in between those two extremes.

From celluloid to new technologies: the limits of the profane

As Bolivia limped tentatively out of a decade of almost uninterrupted brutal dictatorships in the early 1980s, a new generation of politically committed cineastes, including Eduardo López, Raquel Romero, María Eugenia Muñoz and Iván Sanjinés (as well as Beatriz Palacios, Jorge Sanjinés' collaborator and co-director of the feature documentary *Las banderas del amanecer*, 1983) emerged to found the Movimiento de Nuevo Cine y Video Boliviano. Although they were clearly inspired by the New Latin American Cinema (not least in name), the increasingly affordable and accessible new video technologies meant that the Movimiento de Nuevo Cine no longer had to be bound to the costly and labour-intensive business of 16mm or 35mm filmmaking.

For Iván Sanjinés (1995), the community-based video projects carried out in these years through NGOs and other organisations such as Saphi Aru, Qhana and the Centro de Promoción Gregoria Apaza, as well as the Super-8 *cine minero* (miners' cinema) project carried out through the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia from 1983-1986, were seminal projects in the process of 'technological transfer'. They would also lay much of the groundwork, in technical, aesthetic and ideological terms, for the Plan Nacional Indígena Originario de Comunicación Audiovisual (National Plan for Indigenous-Originary Audiovisual Communication), via which since 1996 La Paz-based CEFREC (Centro de Formación y Realización Cinematográfica, directed by Iván Sanjinés) and CAIB (Coordinadora Audiovisual Indígena Originaria de Bolivia) have held video workshops throughout Bolivia to promote the production and distribution of indigenous media.[7]

Meanwhile in Colombia, the stalwarts of politically committed documentary Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva continued to work on 16mm formats through the

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[7] Iván Sanjinés also lists miners' radio – seen playing such a crucial role in Jorge Sanjinés' *El coraje del pueblo* – as a significant forerunner of indigenous video in Bolivia, particularly for its role in consolidating resistance of the bloody coup of Luis García Meza in 1980. See Gumucio (1989) for further details.

1980s, partly thanks to production deals with FOCINE (*Nacer de nuevo/Born Again*, 1987) and the British Channel Four (*Amor, mujeres y flores*, 1989). By now, though, the militant film language of previous decades had for them become 'exhausted', encouraging them to seek a still politically denunciatory idiom that emerged now out of the 'poetic and magical dimensions' of reality, rather than from the Marxist certainties and teleologies of social change that had underpinned their approach towards *Chircales* or *Nuestra voz* (West and West 1993: 44).

But after the untimely death of co-director and cinematographer Jorge Silva in 1988, Rodríguez turned increasingly towards new video and digital technologies that might enable the 'poetics' of reality to emerge more profoundly from the protagonists themselves, rather than from the technical and aesthetic devices of the film camera. After the duo's experience working with indigenous communities during *Nuestra voz*, Rodríguez had maintained close contacts with the emerging continent-wide indigenous video movement, which had its own (by now mythical) foundational moments at a number of Latin American Indigenous People's Film Festivals in the 1980s and 1990s.[8] In 1986 the CRIC, which had worked closely with Rodríguez and Silva on that film (see ch. 4), established a Communications Department through which it began to make documentaries on Hi-8; and in 1992 Iván Sanjinés, the Ecuadorian Alberto Muenala and Rodríguez ran a workshop in Popayán (along the lines of the CEFREC-CAIB sessions) to train Cauca Indians on technical, historical and linguistic aspects of video-filmmaking. *Memoria viva/Living Memory* (1992-3) was directed by Rodríguez but

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[8] The first of these events was held in Mexico in 1985, at which CLACPI (Consejo Latinoamericano de Cine y Video de los Pueblos Indígenas / Latin American Council for Indigenous People's Cinema and Video) was formed. Rodríguez (2002) highlights the sea-change in indigenous appropriation of the audiovisual media at the Rio de Janeiro meeting in 1987, when CLACPI launched a manifesto calling for indigenous people to become active audiovisual subjects rather than objects of study, since at the Mexico event most films screened were made by non-indigenous filmmakers. Iván Sanjinés focuses on the Quito Declaration at the Festival de Cine y Video de las Primeras Naciones de Abya Yala (Film and Video Festival of the Originary Nations of Abya Yala) in 1994, which proclaimed 'the right to the creation and the re-creation of our own image' and demanded 'that the images that are taken [captadas] in indigenous communities be returned to those communities' (1998: 47). For more on indigenous video, see the studies by Schiwy and Ginsburg; as well as Aufderheide (2000b); and Shohat and Stam (1994: 32-37).

makes substantial use of footage filmed by indigenous *videastas*. The Fundación Cine Documental's wholehearted embracement of the new medium came in the 1990s, with *Amapola, la flor maldita/Poppy, the Damned Flower*, 1996) the first film made exclusively on video (Gómez 1996; Rodríguez 2002; Ruffinelli 2003a).

Meanwhile a new generation of technically skilled, socially-committed documentarists were also expressing a growing preference for working on video and digital formats. Mady Samper followed a similar trajectory to Rodríguez, making films such as *Mutaciones/Mutations* (1983) and *Esperanza* (1985) on 16mm via FOCINE, but turning to a cheaper video format (from *La casa de Hemingway/Hemingway's House*, 1986 to *Voces de una Colombia posible/The Voices of a Possible Colombia*, 2003) as the Colombian state funding programme was drying up (Jaramillo 1995; Arboleda Ríos and Osorio 2003: 247-259).[9] The *videasta* Carlos Bernal, who has worked exclusively on video since the mid-1980s, has become, among cinephiles and filmmakers at least, one of Colombia's most respected documentarists, with works such as *Son del barro/From the Mud* (1986), *África, tierra madre/Africa, Mother Earth* (1988) and, more recently, *1.526 metros sobre el nivel del mar/1,526 Metres Above Sea Level* (2004). Bernal has perhaps done more than any other Colombian filmmaker to open up the expressive possibilities of video, and lift the medium out of its age-old inferiority complex as regards celluloid.[10] Such filmmakers, in common with the New Latin American Cinemas in whose shadow they began their careers, undertook to challenge existing political and aesthetic orthodoxies. But their films, like many of those of the Bolivian Movimiento del Nuevo Cine, tend to reflect on personal complexities rather

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[9] The establishment of FOCINE, the state-run body which from 1978 provided credits to filmmakers, was a protectionist measure on the part of the Colombian state that replaced the failed *sobreprecio* system (see ch.1). In the face of bad relations with exhibitors, an inability to recoup costs and general bureaucratic incompetence, FOCINE fizzled out by the early 1990s. See King (1990: 207-215) and Lenti (1993). For a summary of FOCINE's objectives, see FOCINE (1988).

[10] Bernal's work has been extensively celebrated in Colombian film magazines such as *Kinetoscopio* and *Arcadia va al cine*. Among the most useful interviews with the filmmaker are Puerta (2002) and Luis Alberto Álvarez (1991). Further resources are available on his website, www.students.uni-mainz.de/cbernal.

than large-scale societal change, investigating individuals' relationships with their environments rather than interpreting those environments from a pre-determined ideological perspective.

Luis Ospina, who along with Carlos Mayolo had wryly flirted with the 'Colombian Third Cinema' scene in the 1970s with *Oiga vea/See, Hear* and *Agarrando pueblo* (see ch. 2), also moved towards video in the mid-1980s. In *Ojo y vista: peligra la vida del artista/The Perils of Being an Artist* (1988), Ospina and El Fakir (the ranting madman of *Agarrando pueblo*) sit in a comfortable living room exchanging thoughts on life, politics, madness and poverty, basking in the cold bluish-yellow glare of the artificial light and of some television sets in the background, which silently rerun scenes from the film made ten years previously. Ospina's characteristically witty mise-en-scène deftly performs a multiple surrender to the aesthetics, methodology and politics of video, while maintaining something of the critically oppositional political stance of the previous decade. El Fakir's physical presence invades the small, square, shallow video frame in close-up, this new perspective helping to cast him not as some sort of sub-human fairground exotica but as a lucid street-philosopher. Yet there is no pretence at portraying him 'neutrally': the constant glare of the TV screens, from which we gather intermittent snippets of *Agarrando pueblo*, reminds us that he is constantly mediated, never an original presence who can be readily interpreted or understood by Ospina's viewer.

In recent years the likes of Luis Ospina and his Cali contemporary Óscar Campo have examined, questioned and revamped the digital media to the extent that they have been handed by some Colombian writers the mantle of video-auteurs worthy of as much (or even more) critical attention than those working on celluloid. Gustavo Fernández highlights Ospina and Campo as two of the most prominent 'documentary authors of 1990s Colombia', while Juan Diego Caicedo pointedly names them, along with Luis

Echeverría, as *the* Colombian 'cineastes with a consistent oeuvre' (Fernández 2004; Caicedo 1995, 1997 and 1999). That it should be *videastas* rather than celluloid cineastes who have claimed much of the serious critical limelight in Colombia in recent years says much about the aesthetic potential of the medium in a country with precious few resources for filming on 35mm. It also serves to suggest that just because video is cheaper and more accessible than celluloid it is not *inherently* more 'democratic', since it has its own idioms and modes of representation that arguably require as much mastering as do those of its analogue forebear.

Nonetheless, it is fair to say that at least some of the new *videastas* have embraced what is arguably a continuation of 'Imperfect Cinema' by other means. If for Julio García Espinosa in late 1960s Cuba, technological developments could make for a more horizontal relationship between the filmmaker as organic intellectual and the people as the engine of social change, video heralded the possibility that the intellectual might no longer be necessary at all. Filmmakers working on 16mm or 35mm formats depended to some extent on a relatively wide diffusion of their work: even if commercial success was as distant as it was undesirable, production was nigh on impossible to sustain without securing funding of some sort, whether through: foreign coproduction deals (*La nación clandestina* was coproduced with several European television channels including Spanish TVE and the UK's Channel Four); collaboration with charitable organisations (*Nuestra voz de tierra* credits a long list of European NGOs); or deals with state institutions (Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva's contract with FOCINE for *Nacer de nuevo*). Success, or even just presence, at international film festivals was, and is, a crucial part of maintaining a sufficiently high profile to secure such deals. In order to maintain such standing, some level of aesthetic accomplishment was required, meaning the investment of a good deal of highly skilled labour, artistic

vision, and costly film stock.[11] For the new video-makers, though, these problems could be at least partly sidestepped:

> Of course, cinema is in some sense always 'better' than video, but with video combative cinema is still possible. In any case, with cinema, because it's an industry, you always have to make concessions, you have to bargain with your ideology, and the result is a hybrid. I don't like hybrids. With video you can stick to your principles.[12]

On the economic front, Cuba's efforts to institutionalise the New Latin American Cinema 'movement' via the Havana festival coincided with an increasing budgetary tightening at ICAIC – undoubtedly a side-effect of the gradual disintegration of the economic and political power of the USSR, the gargantuan patron of the Cuban Revolution. For Aufderheide, by the end of the 1980s these factors had conspired to produce a crisis in the movement's continentalist aspirations, which was only partly stemmed by Cuba's increasing reliance upon foreign capital to sustain the impetus of Latin American production (Aufderheide 2000b).[13] Meanwhile the 'revolution' in television and video technologies was increasingly coaxing film audiences worldwide from the cinema auditorium to the armchair, leading to a slump in the global markets for film production and distribution. The resulting crisis in the Havana-based 'movement' was seen starkly at the ninth Festival of the New Latin American Cinema in Havana in 1987, in which the revolutionary 'old guard' such as Jorge Sanjinés, Paul

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[11] Marta Rodríguez maintains that for her work European festivals have always had an importance beyond that of the 'intellectual supermarket' denounced in the 1970s by Jorge Sanjinés. When asked whether she was concerned that presence in festivals might neutralise the radical impact of her films, she replied that she saw these events as practical opportunities to make contact with NGO staff, some of whom go on to collaborate with her or set up long term projects in Colombia (conversation with Marta Rodríguez, 8 July 2004).

[12] Conversation with María Eugenia Muñoz, La Paz, 14 August 2003.

[13] However Paranaguá (1997) points out that in spite of the crisis ICAIC was still, by the early 1990s, managing to make significant contributions towards propping up other national cinemas throughout Latin America, as well as continuing to promote 'positive social evolution' at home in the face of strong conservative elements within the Cuban Communist Party.

Leduc and Miguel Littín proved to be firmly at odds over how it should react to the changing technological and economic scenario.[14]

Even if oppositional 'Third' or 'New Latin American' cineastes had always declared their outright opposition to the industrial infrastructure of the global film business, they were clearly not immune to its changing fortunes, and producing films on 35mm or even 16mm, never an easy task for the likes of Sanjinés or Rodríguez and Silva, was increasingly problematic. Filmmakers and theorists such as Paul Leduc and Octavio Getino were, like Muñoz and many of the Movimento de Nuevo Cine y Video Boliviano, calling for a wholehearted embracement of video as the new way forward for those filmmakers still committed to revolutionary social change.[15] Getino's thinking, which saw video as the next front in the class battle for the ideological control of the otherwise alienating mass media, was (perhaps predictably) still strongly redolent both of the 'New Latin American Cinema' manifestoes of the late 1960s and of its Frankfurt School ancestors. For Getino, the audiovisual media were currently 'used as commercial rather than social goods, [...] media that serve class interests – in this case, the privileged class – rather than social media, media that belong to the community'. The problem facing political cinema was therefore 'to clearly specify just how video can, in the Latin American reality that we inhabit, be converted into a *social good* and a *true communicational resource* for each community' (Getino 1986, emphasis in original). In some respects the continentalists' gradual turn from celluloid towards video can be seen as a strategic one aimed at ensuring the survival of a continental movement in crisis.

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[14] The papers presented at this event are published in Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (1988). For an analysis written with the benefit of several years of hindsight, see Aufderheide, 'New Latin American Cinema Reconsidered' (2000a: 238-256).

[15] In his epilogue to an otherwise morose address to the 1987 Havana festival, decrying the seeming downfall of both autonomous militant and state-funded oppositional celluloid filmmaking, Leduc (1988) evoked a 'cinema of the lizards' or a 'salamander cinema' in order 'to survive, not only as cineastes or *videastas*, but as cultures with national dignity'. 'Salamander cinema' was a mode of filmmaking that would survive the outdated 'dinosaur' cinema of the pre-television and video age, but which would also refuse the artistic compromise made by television and 'disposable cinema'.

The debate over whether or not video can be considered the heir of the New Latin American Cinema may tell us more about a particular commentator's or filmmaker's attitude towards the 'defining' moment of political and aesthetic experimentation of the 1960s and 1970s, or towards the nature and function of aesthetic value, than it does about political cinema itself. García Espinosa, presently director of ICAIC's International Film and Television School in San Antonio de los Baños, gives the purportedly democratising force of the new audiovisual technologies a guarded welcome that seems understandable from someone who is both an internationally renowned filmmaker *and* a high-level cultural bureaucrat whose job involves ensuring that national (and continental) production is sustained in sufficient volume and quality to secure the international 'visibility' of Latin America on the world's cinema and television screens. Evoking Walter Benjamin's oft-quoted essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', García Espinosa traces video's anti-elitist, popular heritage back to early cinema:

> Cinema, as Walter Benjamin would say, loses the aura of the unique and unrepeatable work of art, and thereby de-legitimises the traditional 'cult' of the work of art. Looked at from this point of view, cinema de-sacralizes the relationship with the work and brings about a more open, profane and free communication. This constitutes the essence of its irrevocably popular character.[16]

García Espinosa sees the Hollywood model as having 'ruined' cinema's liberatory potential by constructing the new 'false auras' of its stars around the logic of capital: when the new mass art lured its viewers into the 'phony spell of a commodity' (Benjamin 1999: 224), García Espinosa claims, 'not only did art itself lose out, [but] the critical spirit of the audience was lost'. 'Art' is equated here with the same dialectical thought and 'free communication' that defined the (hypothetical) audiences of the 1960s/1970s 'Imperfect' and 'Third' cinemas. Since this type of critical engagement is

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[16] Here, and throughout this paragraph, I cite Stephen Hart's translation of García Espinosa's lecture delivered at University College London in February 2005 (García Espinosa 2005). For the original Spanish version of this section of the lecture, see García Espinosa (2004).

thought to be 'embedded within cinema', the Hollywood model is characterised as a bastardisation of the true, popular nature of the filmic art. If the political realities of the twenty-first century demand a re-evaluation of the utopian revolutionary dreams previously pinned to cinema, it is still defined as a medium that can reverse Latin America's 'invisibility' in the face of the global dominance of Hollywood's image-imperialism. New technologies serve to push even harder against the market-driven or hierarchical boundaries of 'traditional' notions of art, which are defined by a combination of North American capitalism (mass culture) and European elitism (high culture). Given the ongoing technological revolution, 'the transition from the sacred to the profane seems irreversible'.

The profane, though, is not without its limits. García Espinosa has admitted in a public debate to being concerned that the ever wider accessibility of video and digital technologies means that Latin America risks producing a cinema that is 'too imperfect' to be useful. The ongoing democratisation of the media in Latin America is of course to be welcomed. But for García Espinosa the problem with the video boom is that ever-easier access to media production and distribution means that the studious engagement between filmmaker, image and the world that characterised the vanguard cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s may lose currency, and the iconoclastic young filmmakers risk losing the effectiveness of the politically-committed but carefully-wrought work. Moreover, because aesthetic accomplishment and production values have a significant say in the national, continental and global diffusion of cinema, much low-budget video work simply cannot attract audiences, lured away by the superior technical quality of commercial cinema.

Jorge Sanjinés remains as fascinatingly contradictory a figure as ever with regard to perfection, imperfection and political cinema. While the Ukamau Group's theoretical output betrays a staunch commitment to principles close to the militant New

Latin American Cinema, their 1995 feature *Para recibir el canto de los pájaros* (shot on a digital format but transferred to 35mm so that the film could compete on the international festival circuit) boasts production values that most Bolivian cineastes could only dream of, and the film's relatively high-profile publicity campaign made much of the starring role of internationally-renowned actor Geraldine Chaplin. Yet given the high costs of the transfer to 35mm (some US$500 per print, according to the director), the subsequent movie *Los hijos del último jardín* (2004) was shot and distributed entirely on digital formats. Judging by Sanjinés' most recent work, digital technologies mean that even if certain compromises are unavoidable (not least with regard to the digital image's flat depth of field), a filmmaker working in a country as economically disadvantaged as Bolivia can make a high-impact product without capitulating to the artistic degradations of 'disposable cinema', to borrow Paul Leduc's phrase, or significantly straying from the plastic qualities of celluloid cinematography in favour of (purportedly inferior) video aesthetics:

> [Digital film] is a fantastic medium, especially in a country that doesn't have a laboratory – you can see the image you've filmed straight away, exactly the way you want to. We did the lighting [for *Los hijos*] as though we were making a film on celluloid, we used all the paraphernalia that's used for cinema. We could light [the space of action] and then see straight away how it looked on film. [...] And also, this way the film stock goes a lot further, you can just go on saying 'roll, roll, roll' for as long as you want. You don't have the kind of problems you used to: 'Action, take three!' 'But we've run out of film!' 'We could have done it better but we don't have any film left!' (Garcia and Nuñez 2004) [17]

While the Ukamau Group has used digital technologies largely as a strategic device to sidestep some of the vicissitudes of making quality cinema in an 'underdeveloped' country, other filmmakers have actively woven the specific properties

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[17] Because Bolivia does not have a single laboratory for processing celluloid film, negatives are usually sent to neighbouring countries. Because of the costly and time-consuming nature of this process, directors and editors do not enjoy the luxury of viewing daily rushes (developed prints of the day's filmed footage) in order to keep a check on technical and aesthetic aspects of the filming, as is the norm in wealthier countries. As well as making it extremely hard for a director such as Sanjinés to compete with ever increasing standards on the international commercial and art-house circuits, this situation can result in economic ruin.

of video and digital technologies (such as extremely light and relatively unobtrusive cameras, a limited palette of colours and shallow depth of field) into their working methodologies and aesthetics. For Marta Rodríguez, video and digital formats mean that she and her team can travel through Colombian rural war zones, where army, guerrilla and paramilitary checkpoints are common, with relative ease. Furthermore, new technology enables an intimacy between documentary filmmaker documented subject that would have been impossible with 35mm or even 16mm cameras, through the subtle physical presence of the digital camera and the 'quotidian' quality of the image it renders.[18] Just as in the 1950s and 1960s the availability of lightweight cameras and sound-recording equipment was closely linked to the emergence of movements such as Fernando Birri's Escuela Documental de Santa Fe, Jorge Ruiz's Bolivia Films, and the Brazilian Cinema Novo, video and digital technologies since the 1980s have enabled *videastas* such as Marta Rodríguez to further break down the power relationship between filmmaker and subject, through both methodology and textual practices.

Now as then, documentary filmmakers using new technologies have tended to claim that increased physical mobility and financial autonomy have enabled a deeper, more honest and more authentic link with reality. Birri, for instance, called for a cinema that 'renders [an image] just as reality *is*' by 'confronting reality with a camera and documenting it, documenting underdevelopment', as opposed to the 'subcinema' that denied that reality.[19] Julianne Burton has argued that Latin American documentarians later became more inclined to see reality as something that needed to be discovered and revealed through historical and political research, film praxis and process, rather than a pre-existing and readily reproducible quantity (Burton 1997; see also ch. 1 above).

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[18] Personal conversations with Marta Rodríguez, Bogotá, June-July 2004. See also Jorge Ruffinelli's interview with Marta Rodríguez (2003a).

[19] 'La escuela documental de Santa Fe: saldo de una experiencia' [1964], in Birri (1996: 229-235, emphasis in original). For the influence of new technologies and of the *cinéma vérité* movements on the Latin American social documentarians of the 1950s and 1960s, see also Paulo Antonio Paranaguá, 'Orígenes, evolución y problemas' in Paranaguá ed. (2003: 13-78) and, for Jorge Ruiz, Gumucio (1983: 155-175).

Indeed, at the 1987 Havana festival Jorge Sanjinés (strictly speaking a fiction filmmaker, but surely sufficiently committed to portraying 'social reality' to fit into Burton's analytical framework) stood firmly by the need to erect complex methodological and cinematic structures in order to 'capture the internal poetic-imaginative rhythms of our people, their ways of recreating reality, by transforming that reality in order to discover it in all its depth' (1988: 33). Yet the rather different scenario of 'technology transfer' tends to leave the vanguard aesthetics used, say, in *La nación clandestina* to one side. Some fifteen years later Marta Rodríguez, by now converted into a grassroots documentarian of Colombia's endemic civil violence, rearticulated what had already been the case for many years for activist filmmakers:

> [With *Los hijos del trueno/Children of Thunder* (1998)], we can no longer afford much relevance or importance to aesthetics, you can even shoot out of focus. The indigenous people who filmed the massacre of twenty other indigenous people were absolutely terrified, the camera was trembling. [...] The images are blurred, but the testimony is there. So now we're just not in a position on the technical side, [though] we'd like to be able to achieve the perfection of *Nuestra voz de tierra* or *Chircales*, when we never had a paramilitary breathing down our necks. (Ruffinelli 2003a)

What contemporary filmmakers like Marta Rodríguez, as well as indigenous *videastas* from Bolivia or Colombia, do have in common with the likes of Jorge Sanjinés, though, is 'the will to "de-alienate" alienating social relations [...] not simply [through] the introduction of a new content or the transformation of cinematic forms, but the transformation of the subjective conditions of film production and film viewing' (Burton 1997: 180-181). The difference, perhaps, is a matter of degree rather than of kind. While Jorge Sanjinés was in 1987 ardently defending magical realism as a way of 'violating Western codes', for Marta Rodríguez this very type of textual subversion, which she and Jorge Silva had used to such stunning effect in *Nuestra voz*, was losing currency (Sanjinés 1988: 33). On the one hand Sanjinés has continued to focus on the constant aesthetic renewal of a high-quality artistic product (the polished sequence shots

of *Para recibir el canto de los pájaros*, or the blending of choreographed and documentary footage in *Los hijos del último jardín*, is as impressive as any of Sanjinés' 1970s work), while maintaining a relatively hierarchical working methodology (according to Freya Schiwy (unpublished), Reynaldo Yujra, protagonist of *La nación clandestina*, ironically remarked that Sanjinés 'discovered' him for the part). On the other hand Rodríguez, as discussed above, has largely eschewed aspirations to great aesthetic accomplishment, while the 'subjective conditions of film production' in which she operates are more de-centralised than ever before.[20]

On the level of audience reach it may be that Sanjinés has been more successful than Rodríguez. The Ukamau Group has managed to sustain national and international commercial and art-house distribution campaigns alongside rural screenings with portable projectors and generators, albeit at the cost of quantity (only three features have been released in the period 1989-2005). On the other hand Rodríguez admits that even distributing her films on VHS among the rural communities with whom she has worked can be problematic due to the proliferation of paramilitary, guerrilla and army checkpoints in many parts of Colombia, and as a consequence her main audiences have in recent years have tended (ironically) to be urban intellectual connoisseurs of quality Colombian cinema.

What these debates reflect is that when talking of the gradual 'transfer of technologies' from organic-intellectual-filmmakers to their erstwhile anthropological subjects (for instance through a high level of mutual consultation between filmmakers and subjects, or through video production workshops), one runs up against the mutually contradictory forces of technological democratisation and hierarchical control – or, to

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[20] Never a purely anthropologistic filmmaker, though, Rodríguez cannot help commenting, with a hint of nostalgia, that video and synchronous sound 'instils a dangerously facile approach, the students film a few things, a few interviews, and they think they've got a film, but you look at it and you find there's nothing there'. By contrast, when the Rodríguez-Silva team were obliged to use postsynchronous sound they were able to observe everyday details and gestures to achieve a more profound dialogue between sound and image (Ruffinelli 2003a).

put it another way, of the raw reality of unmediated footage and the potentially more 'profound' or searching reality of the aestheticised image. Since digital technologies are relatively cheap, straightforward and accessible, should urban-based and Western-educated filmmakers such as Marta Rodríguez or the Bolivian Iván Sanjinés simply 'surrender' the means of audiovisual production to, for instance, indigenous (potential) filmmakers? If a degree of specialist knowledge and technique is still desirable, how should the transfer of skills be negotiated across the rocky epistemological terrain that lies between indigenous and non-indigenous modes of apprehending the world? What are the differences among: Jorge Sanjinés' 'cinema with the people' in the 1970s; Marta Rodríguez making videos such as *Memoria viva* (1992-3), that use some footage filmed by indigenous *videastas* but whose editing and post-production rely on her own (elite) technical expertise; videos made via CEFREC, conceived, shot and edited mainly by indigenous filmmakers and under the supervision of the La Paz-based headquarters; and videos made autonomously by Colombian indigenous organisations such as the CRIC or the Fundación Sol y Tierra? Indigenous filmmakers are unlikely to have the time, resources, educational background, social and geographical mobility or indeed the volition to create *indigenista* masterpieces such as *Nuestra voz de tierra* or *La nación clandestina*. How, then, should the Western colonial implications that are deeply embedded within filmmaking and film language be negotiated?

The politics of taste

Like the discussions of Octavio Getino, Julio García Espinosa, Paul Leduc *et al* over imperfect, disposable and democratising cinemas, this is a debate that has much to say about what the function of political cinema/video should be, about whether aesthetic quality 'matters', what it entails, and its unspoken imbrication with economic modes of production and the social and cultural forms that underlie them. Noël Burch suggests

that the 'language' that came to dominate mainstream and commercial film production in much of the world (classical Hollywood continuity style, or Burch's 'Institutional Mode of Representation' (IMR), as discussed in ch. 4) is closely linked to the way in which cinema in Western societies became bound up in the logic of discardable consumption (Burch 1990). He argues that both during Eadweard Muybridge's and the Lumière brothers' experiments in late nineteenth-century high society salons, and during cinema's increasing aspirations towards becoming a bourgeois rather than a proletarian pursuit in the 1910s USA, it emerged that both the medium's scientific usefulness and its aesthetic values tended to be measured by virtue of its relationship to culturally-bound codes of verisimilitude. Many among Muybridge's audiences found his shots of a moving horse ugly and unbelievable since they broke the codes of nineteenth-century naturalist painting. Lumière found that because his polycentric cinematic compositions broke the 'centripetal' rules of academic painting, audiences preferred to see a given film several times in succession in order to approach their sense of having 'seen' the piece in its entirety: unlike naturalist painting, Lumière's films did not 'spontaneously offer the reader's guide that would allow their complex content to be grasped and enumerated' (Burch 1990: 17).

The gist of Burch's argument is that the IMR emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century as a cinematic analogue of naturalist painting, catering for the bourgeois taste for visual depth, centring, continuity, closure and linearity. Burch, strongly influenced by Marxist cultural enquiry, takes this primarily as evidence of bourgeois cooptation of a formerly 'primitive' and proletarian medium, civilising it into an artistic mode that portrayed the world as rounded, coherent and complete, and the status quo as natural and just. Jesús Martín-Barbero's more recent study of theatrical and film melodrama has taken up the same debate but emphasises that, above and beyond its reactionary and co-optive effect, the genre has 'connect[ed] with the hunger

of the masses to make themselves socially visible' (2003: 227). According to this formulation, classical Hollywood style was able to offer viewers – often working-class immigrants with little time or money to spend – the impression of having 'seen' or 'grasped' a film in just one viewing, giving them the chance to be entertained and schooled in the values of American society while receiving value for money and consolidating their stake in the capitalist logic of mass culture.[21]

While the New Latin American Cinema owed much of its international fame (or notoriety) to its radical departure, in terms of both textual operations and social process, from what Burch termed as the IMR, indigenous and *indigenista* video is not doctrinally committed to overcoming any dominant mode of representation or diffusion. Yet the videos of groups such as CEFREC and CRIC may hint that those earlier, Marxist-inspired films gained critical success internationally precisely *because of* their direct subversion of mainstream film language – that is, because they defined themselves at the opposite end of a linear axis, with the IMR as the normative pole. On the other hand, while indigenous video, or the works of *indigenista* video-makers such as Eduardo López or Marta Rodríguez, do challenge established mainstream forms and institutions, in other ways they appear to use those forms uncritically. It is perhaps because of their refusal to define themselves in mainly oppositional terms that they have tended not to be consumed as artistically accomplished products of a highbrow international art cinema, or reconverted into symbols of national patrimony (D'Lugo 2003; see also ch. 1 above). By defining themselves rather on their own terms, they become somewhat less digestible to mainstream and arthouse circuits.

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[21] See Burch (1990), particularly 'Baudelaire versus Frankenstein' (6-22) and 'Business is business: an invisible audience' (109-142). Burch does, however, warn against a 'populist' reading of his argument, reminding us that the makers of 'primitive' cinema were themselves bourgeois; that little or no evidence exists to assess the actual reactions of the early 'popular' audiences to primitive cinema; and that primitive cinema was far from a 'pure' form, often created out of 'bits and pieces by the middle classes for the masses' (139). Furthermore recent studies (such as Singer 2004) have cast doubt on whether the audiences of primitive cinemas were as homogenously proletarian as Burch claims.

Eduardo López recalls the cultural difficulties his crew encountered while making *Sarxawa/I'm Leaving*, 1988) with altiplano Aymara communities, when after some two weeks of filming the crew set about selecting footage to include in the final edit. As the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental had discovered when working with indigenous communities, López found that his protagonists became annoyed when the editor fragmented scenes by cutting and splicing shots in order to convert the filmed footage into a 'recognisable' narrative framework. This was an inevitable process for a film commissioned by the Qhana Institute, a progressive (though not radical) La Paz-based popular education NGO seeking development, equality and literacy for Aymara peasants within a democratising, decentralising and multi-cultural nation-state: Qhana would have required a relatively standardised product that could easily be used for both campaigning and community educational purposes (Qhana 1997). The indigenous community, on the other hand, argued that a two-day long celebration that had been filmed almost in its entirety should be presented just as it was filmed, and eventually a version lasting some eight hours was made and shown to the community.[22] More recently, Iván Sanjinés has noted that many videos made by indigenous communities are, by Western standards, slow, didactic and repetitive. But he does not read this as a sign of amateurishness or lack of ability:

> Indigenous stories don't have the same tradition of climax and suspense that Western narrative does – they have their moments of tension, but not necessarily building up to a climax. It may be that it's building up, but everything has equal importance, it's not that one thing is more important than everything else [...] It's not about saving time, which has become an obsession in the West, where things have to be quick and concise. [...] Telling something once, and then again...it can even be a bit didactic at times [...] But it's not the same over and over again, it's the same thing from different angles [...] It's a complementary form of narrating – that's how reality is. You tell it bit by bit. For them it's not repetitive, it's complementary.[23]

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[22] Conversation with Eduardo López, 11 September 2003.
[23] Conversation with Iván Sanjinés, 11 September 2003.

A non-indigenous viewer watching the CEFREC-produced documentary *Buscando una vida justa/In Search of Justice* (2001), or the CRIC's *Caloto...un año después/Caloto...One Year On* (1992) or *Na' Wëthaw Püt'* (1996), may well find them formally uninspiring and formulaic. Many indigenous videos use an authoritative voice-over and feature long, uneventful sequences recording scenes from everyday life that seemingly add little to either narrative development or lyrical reflection. *Así nos organizamos*, an educational piece on the origins of indigenous political organisation, uses devices that Western viewers might find hackneyed: it is framed by an elderly man telling a young child about his community's history from the Spanish invasion to the present day, and his narrative is borne out on the image and sound-tracks by paintings, drawings, architectural features and music that have a straightforward parallel relationship to the voice-over. *Buscando una vida justa*, which documents the 'Marcha por la vida' of *cocaleros*, students and protestors against water privatisation from Cochabamba Department to La Paz in 2001, also uses a voice-of-god narrator, and there is little reflective or stylistic elaboration on the first-person footage of the march.[24]

Apparently neither of these films is concerned with questioning the 'truth-value' of the images they present, with excavating the appearance of reality rendered through the footage in the manner that Julianne Burton celebrated in much of the New Latin American Cinema. Such films have found niche markets abroad in NGOs, academic institutions and museums, often because they are perceived as direct, informative indexes to distant realities, but they have met with nothing approaching the 'film-as-art' recognition of the earlier 'authored' vanguard productions of the Ukamau Group or the Fundación Cine Documental.[25] As I suggested in Chapter 1, while Jorge Sanjinés

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[24] For further discussions of the Voice-of-God narrator in documentary, and of modes of documentary which offer critical alternatives, see Nichols (1991); Renov (2004: particularly xi-xxiv and 191-215).

[25] Videos such as those produced by CEFREC and the CRIC have been distributed by or kept in collections in the US through bodies such as the Latin American Video Archives (www.lavavideo.org), the National Museum of the American Indian and the New York-based Colombia Media Project. They have also won international approval on the indigenous video festival circuit, at events such as the

claimed in the 1970s to privilege peasant audiences who 'passionately discussed not the virtues of the film itself (as occurs in any bourgeois environment) but the virtues of the historical experience of which the film forms a part' (Gumucio and Quezada 1975), his relatively vertical working methodology and the relatively high costs of shooting on 16mm film meant that without the aesthetic 'virtues' that the Ukamau Group's films undoubtedly possess they simply could not have been made.

Yet for indigenous *videastas* this, in a way, is precisely the point. With the 'democratisation' of the audiovisual media, indigenous productions do not necessarily need to be bound by the expectations of a 90-minute feature film or a 30-minute television documentary – concerns that have influenced at least some of the work of both Jorge Sanjinés and Marta Rodríguez (see ch. 1).[26] In Bolivia, CEFREC and CAIB are involved in running the Red Nacional Indígena de Comunicación e Intercambio Audiovisual (National Indigenous Network for Audiovisual Communication and Exchange), which aims to consolidate the distribution of indigenous-produced videos among geographically and culturally dispersed rural (as well as urban) indigenous communities. The Red Nacional responds to a complementary logic whereby indigenous communities associated with CEFREC-CAIB are entitled to free copies of productions made by other communities, which are all held in the organisation's central archive in La Paz, operating in autonomy from the national or international financial and ideological interests of the cinema and television industries. However, when copies are requested by outsiders (for instance, researchers or librarians from European or North American universities), lengthy authorisation procedures are required, since

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Originary Nations of Abya Yala Cinema and Video Festivals, and the Taos Talking Pictures Festival in New Mexico (2002). The absence of such films from undergraduate curricula seems closely intertwined with both the films' lack of visibility on the mainstream festival circuit, and their perceived lack of aesthetic quality.

[26] Martín-Barbero (2003: 302-303) defines the rhythm and ritual of television viewing in modern society as a 'social temporality' inscribed into 'the everyday experience of the market'.

authorial rights are accorded not simply to the *responsable* (the term used by CEFREC in preference to 'director') but to all those who participated in the filmmaking process.[27]

The ambivalent nature of CEFREC's flirtation with the mainstream was played out when Iván Sanjinés and Reynaldo Yujra were invited to host a series of (free-of-charge) screenings of CEFREC videos in the city centre, outlying community centres and provincial venues on the margins of the 2003 Ibero-American Film Festival in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. While the main festival screened the latest Latin American celluloid releases (many of them European co-productions) presented amid the glitz and glamour of red carpets and star appearances, CEFREC's sessions were poorly attended and received little press coverage. Set in contrast to the endless press hype over *cruceño* director Rodrigo Bellot's rather forgettable debut *Dependencia sexual/Sexual Dependency* (2003), the only Bolivian celluloid feature at the festival), and the enthusiastic ovations of the audiences that crammed into Santa Cruz's René Moreno cinema to see it, journalists and audiences (as well as the CEFREC delegates themselves) were in agreement as to the extremely limited extent to which CEFREC's project can feed off or contribute to the establishment of a commercial film industry in Bolivia.[28]

Not unlike CEFREC, the Sucre-based documentarist Humberto Mancilla makes videos such as *El año 501/The Year 501* and *El retorno de los tiempos/The Return* in close collaboration with indigenous communities, usually on the initiative of the communities themselves. Mancilla's films often have little overt synthesis from the

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[27] Funding is a constant source of problems for CEFREC. The organisation receives financing from AECI (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional), which has sponsored the Plan Nacional since 1997), as well as the government of the Basque Autonomous Community and several NGOs. According to Iván Sanjinés, none of these bodies interferes in any way with CEFREC's activities. Conversation with Iván Sanjinés, 15 August 2003; see also the website of the Plan Nacional, http://videoindigena.bolnet.bo (accessed 30 July 2003).

[28] Conversations with Iván Sanjinés, Santa Cruz, August 2003. Among the few articles that did cover CEFREC's presence at the festival were Ortiz 2003; and one mournful piece that bemoaned the *cruceño* audience's tepid uptake of the many free Bolivian video screenings on offer at the festival, in contrast to the large and enthusiastic audiences at the main festival ('El público no le saca provecho' 2003). For reactions to Bellot's film, see coverage in Santa Cruz dailies *El Deber* and *El Nuevo Día*, 21-30 August 2003; and Wood 2003.

filmmaker/editor, and document indigenous marches, meetings, celebrations and narrations that try to consolidate indigenous historical memory of past struggles (such as that of Tupaj Katari) as a basis for current struggles over territorial and cultural rights. In *Allin Muju/The Good Seed* (1991), which links ancestral agricultural techniques to indigenous political and social mobilisation, the camera positions itself and moves as though it were one more participant in the meeting, and the film's protagonists address the camera (held by Mancilla himself) as such. This 'insider's viewpoint' reflects Mancilla's own origins in an indigenous *ayllu*, having moved to the city to enable better mobility and access to equipment. Unlike the New Latin American Cinema and CEFREC, which both, in their own ways, privilege what Rivers (1994) terms the 'decolonisation of the soul' over direct political action, Mancilla's films are made exclusively with the intention of handing them over to the *ayllus* in order to consolidate the political project of the Consejo de Ayllus y Markas del Kollasuyo.[29]

What Mancilla's films share with many of those of CEFREC, as well as the Colombian productions of the CRIC and the Cauca video production group the Fundación Sol y Tierra,[30] is a lack of need or volition to shape their productions to the Western logic of time that underpins the politics of taste and aesthetics in the global cinematic marketplace. Andean time is not experienced as a quantifiable commodity that must be 'spent' or 'saved' – the rationale that informs the deeply-engrained habits determining the temporal structure and infrastructures of mainstream cinema. An 'ideal' model of indigenous spectatorship might pose that Andean communities experience and appreciate film and video in a way that responds to the Andean experience of qualitative

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[29] The Consejo is an association of Aymara communities, but unrelated to Felipe Quispe's *katarismo*. According to Mancilla, the Consejo attempts to make political change from a purely oppositional stance in order to create a new type of state, rather than Quispe's movement, which (Mancilla claims) seeks to inveigle itself into the upper echelons of mainstream political power. Personal conversations with Humberto Mancilla, Sucre, August 2003. For more on the complex relationships between *katarismo*, Quispe and the state, see Albó (1987); Albó (1994); and Javier Sanjinés (2004: ch. 4).

[30] The CRIC has, in recent years, maintained sporadic video production via its communications department. Sol y Tierra emerged as a non-violent cultural resistance organisation after the indigenous armed Quintín Lame self-defence guerrilla lay down its arms in 1991 (see Gómez 1996a).

time, tied to cyclical, ritual and rhythmic activities such as breathing, tides, sowing and harvesting (Estermann 1998: 139-192), rather than Western capitalism's quantitative perception of an inexorable forward temporal march, which the market subdivides into productive (bought) and non-productive (free, or leisure) time. Jorge Sanjinés' experiences in producing *Yawar Mallku*, as well as comments by Marta Rodríguez and Eduardo López, have shown that the production and exhibition of films in indigenous communities are often closely bound to ritual, and many communities refuse to allow the filmmaking process to take precedence over their own rhythms of labour and celebration.[31]

Indigenous *videastas* and their advocates often express attitudes towards the mainstream media that are akin to Adorno and Horkheimer's (2000) view of the culture industry in capitalist societies as a passively internalised ideological tool of 'mass deception'. Iván Sanjinés, for instance, has described the Bolivian political system as a mechanism 'that tries to keep society and the mass media in a sort of passive contemplation as regards what happens in our national context' (1995: 34); while an unnamed Purepecha Indian, quoted by Marta Rodríguez, contrasts activist indigenous use of the media with the soap operas and 'alienating programmes' that operate in 'the interests of dominant society, the interests of the transnationals, of making us swallow consumer products that are not necessary to us' (2002: 58). Spectatorship of indigenous films, on the other hand, is often characterised as revolving around celebration and not consumption, as forming a part of ongoing processes of forming and adapting political agendas and cultural identities, not passively accepting social models that are imposed from the outside.

It is not my task here to speculate over the extent to which the expression of such ideas is connected to indigenous filmmakers' experiences of working with

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[31] Sanjinés 1986: 43-47; León Hoyos 1982; conversations with Eduardo López, September 2003.

Marxist-influenced cineastes and intellectuals, and to what extent they are observations stemming from their own experience; indeed, to do so may well perpetuate a simplistic dyad between alienating 'Western' thought systems and pure, authentic 'indigenous' ones. It is perhaps more useful to consider such statements as themselves constituting ideological proposals. In Terry Eagleton's sense of ideology as 'lived relations', ideology and ideological statements emerge from the interplay between individuals and the material substance of society as a whole, rather than deriving, in Althusser's sense, only from dominant society (Eagleton 1991: 3-31). This allows us to relativise subaltern claims to having successfully 'appropriated' media apparatus, since we must remember that their own optimistic statements about the efficiency of gaining increased access to the means of producing and distributing media are themselves informed by an ideological position. On the other hand this framework does not exclude the possibility of adopting a politically partisan stance in favour of the claims of indigenous media, *or* the possibility that indigenous people might, just like anyone else, derive pleasure and inspiration from watching mainstream television or cinema. Indeed, CEFREC fiction shorts such as *Ángeles de la tierra/Angels of the Earth* and *En busca del guerrero/ Searching for the Warrior* make much use of soap-opera strategies such as melodramatic performance style, intense close-ups and heightened music during moments of high emotion, and schematic, unambiguous, black-and-white characters. Meanwhile the diegesis of *El diablo nunca duerme/The Devil Never Sleeps* is framed around its narrator sitting in Hell with a Satan figure, relating the story (of which he is the main protagonist) as it unfolds on a television screen before them. *El diablo* betrays a highly complex analytical position as regards the role of mediating technology and narrative form in indigenous media's process of 'recording' its cultural heritage. To return momentarily to Burch, if the IMR is reflective of a social economy imposed by the bourgeoisie on the rest of society, we can see idealised paradigms of indigenous

narrative and spectatorship not as absolute models which all Indians must follow in order to prove their Indian-ness, but as an ideologically-positioned schema that might be at least partially drawn on to aid a particular political cause.

The production process of indigenous and *indigenista* filmmaking would also appear to undermine the capitalist economy of the global entertainment market. While labour time in capitalist societies tends to be sold to the highest bidder, Jorge Sanjinés' experiences in filming *Yawar Mallku*, immortalised in *Para recibir el canto de los pájaros*, have shown that indigenous actors' labour cannot simply be 'bought', even at a price significantly higher than the financial gains they would make in their daily lives, since the well-being and continuity of the community is often deemed more important than individual gain. Indeed, a number of fiction films made through CEFREC – often structured as moral tales – dramatise the suffering caused when personal profit is put before traditional cultural beliefs and social rhythms. In *Chaleco de plata/Vest Made of Money*, Satuco (played by Reynaldo Yujra) is punished with a sudden and unexpected death after hoarding a bundle of banknotes – the proceeds of selling his family's cow – in the inside of his jacket. In *Oro maldito/Cursed Gold* an outsider, Tito, arrives in a rural village in search of some gold which, according to legend, is under a nearby waterfall. In spite of a gnarled old man's advice that the gold is protected by a curse, Tito, like a modern-day conquistador in search of El Dorado, treks to the source of the gold and jumps into the lake to search for it; he eventually emerges, but in the body of the old man. The curse has come true: this time, it seems, *Pachamama* has defeated the conquistador.

It is notable too that these films also resist incorporation into 'universal' systems of understanding on the level of narrative devices. The action in both videos shifts subtly between dream and waking consciousness – realms which in Aymara society are seen as complementary realities, rather than as opposed fictional and 'real' states.

Therefore, what might seem inconclusive and problematic to an outsider (did the resolution occur in dream or reality? did the character *really* get his comeuppance, or did his unconscious help him avert the catastrophe?) is, for an indigenous viewer, readily comprehensible.

That the issues of political efficacy, taste and cultural codes are deeply intertwined was neatly crystallised in a recent altercation between a panel of CEFREC and CAIB members and a (non-indigenous) Bolivian at an academic conference organised by the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés in La Paz. The delegate, apparently frustrated by the films' lack of ideological clarity, criticised them for being overly aestheticised and 'folkloric', therefore failing to effectively communicate a political agenda. Francisco Cajías deflected the question by pointing out that the videos are made by indigenous people themselves, not by external filmmakers pursuing a particular intellectual or exoticising agenda.[32] Iván Sanjinés later commented that 'we don't have to make a film about a massacre in order to do something political. It's the whole process that matters, not the product. If someone finds it folkloric, well, that's up to them'.[33] While the outsider wished for indigenous videos simply to promote an agenda or 'speak a truth' about the predicaments and politics of Indian communities, the filmmakers themselves (and their collaborators) realise that the process is far more complex: for videos to have a deep and lasting impact they must hold some sort of cultural stake in the society in which they operate. A fiction film that buries its political concerns within layers of personal and collective aesthetic visions, or self-reflective narrative devices, might in the long run be more effective than a straightforward naturalistic documentary. A film can, and should, operate on any number of political

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[32] The discussion described here occurred when Iván Sanjinés, Daniel Gutiérrez, Francisco Cajías, Nila Ruiz and Reynaldo Yujra addressed the Second International Conference of the Association of Bolivian Studies, 21-25 July 2003, together with a screening of the film *Qati Qati/Whispers of Death* (resp. Reynaldo Yujra, 1999).

[33] Personal conversation, 11 September 2003.

levels beneath, to borrow Iván Sanjinés' example, simply placing a camera before the aftermath of a massacre and letting it roll.

Buried beneath all these comments is a point that in many ways recalls Jorge Sanjinés' belief in the intractable need for cultural-historical identity and social-political change to be deeply enmeshed and mutually reinforcing. But Jorge Sanjinés has tended to view himself in Gramscian terms, seeing cultural identity as a part of the ideological superstructure that must be grasped, comprehended and radicalised by all sectors of society in order to raise a 'collective will' out of a nation sharply divided along class and racial (not to mention gender) lines, in order to bring about a lasting and effective transformation of the material base (see Hall 1996a). Conversely, videos produced by CEFREC usually view social and political change from within indigenous society itself (with all its internal contradictions), rather than claiming great relevance beyond an indigenous framework.[34] But they do not necessarily present an idealised, homogenised vision of indigenous society, and they do not subscribe to a purist rejection of using non-indigenous institutions and infrastructures (such as NGOs, television contracts or video sales to Western institutions) to their own ends; and they do engage with the problematic relationship between indigenous and *q'ara* (non-indigenous) societies. Furthermore, if CEFREC videos achieve solidarity and comprehension from the *q'ara* sphere either in Bolivia or abroad, this can only strengthen their claims. However, their involvement with *q'ara* institutions does not compromise the belief that, as Javier Sanjinés comments in relation to radical *katarismo*, the linear, Western historical narratives that they might promote form part of 'the dominant strategy that relates knowledge to the homogenising notions of state, culture and nation' (2004: 152).[35] For

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[34] Indeed, Schiwy (2002b: 117-123) points out that for indigenous *videastas*, Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual is problematic in its assumption that the production of knowledge must be a solitary, written process rather than oral and communicative – a notion that derives from Cartesian Western thought.

[35] In this respect CEFREC manages to avoid the problems delineated by Daniel Mato (2004) of those representatives of indigenous movements at non-mainstream events in North America (he cites the

Iván Sanjinés, and apparently for many indigenous *videastas*, immediate political gains in the framework of the Bolivian state matter less than the cultural act of making videos and interacting with an ancestral historical memory. Five hundred years of colonial domination have shown that cultural and historical cohesion can achieve more than political process alone – even when institutional change occurs at state level (for instance, in the 1952 Revolution).

The fundamental importance of cultural identity in indigenous video is exemplified in the fiction short *Los ángeles de la tierra* (2001/2003). The film, referred to with some irony by CEFREC member Franklin Gutiérrez as an indigenous version of *La nación clandestina*,[36] shares with Jorge Sanjinés' *indigenista* masterpiece both a starring actor (Reynaldo Yujra, who played the lead role in the 1989 movie) and its basic premise: an Aymara man living in the city comes to realise the falsity and self-denial that underlies his life there. In *Los ángeles*, Sinchi (played by Alfredo Copa) arrives in the hostile city in search of his estranged brother Antonio (played by Yujra). The (digital video) camera identifies immediately with Sinchi's point of view, with an extreme low-angle tilting up to reveal a gleaming high-rise tower block above him. This, perhaps, is the poor man's version of the scene from *Yawar Mallku* in which Paulina enters La Paz, swamped by the concrete jungle that envelops her (see ch. 4), and by Alberto Villalpando's experimental, dissonant soundtrack. In *Los ángeles de la tierra*, when Sinchi appears at Antonio's office, supposedly hoping to work as his gardener, Antonio realises his brother's identity, but says nothing and sends him on his way. Beset by guilt, Antonio falls into a drunken stupor and ends up in hospital; when Sinchi goes to visit he gives his brother no chance to repent, telling him 'you're ashamed of me because I dress the way our forefathers dressed. No, I don't know you,

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example of the 1994 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife). Mato argues that in order to obtain the support, interest and solidarity of their foreign audiences, indigenous representatives have sometimes shaped their self-representations to those audiences' exoticist expectations, therefore subsuming their own narratives to the images created of them in globally dominant societies.

[36] Conversation with Franklin Gutiérrez, 15 August 2003.

and you don't know me!' The film ends with Sinchi leaving Antonio behind and running away from the camera, presumably returning to his *ayllu*, having realised his brother's betrayal of his identity is beyond repair.

Jorge Sanjinés' *Nación*, in redeeming Sebastián on the condition of his repentance and renewal of cultural tradition, leaves the door open for Bolivians with any indigenous heritage to take a stake in the *indigenista* model of social change; furthermore, as I discussed above, it celebrates the crucial alliance between indigenous-identified *ayllus* and class-identified miners in their struggle against an oppressive national regime. Yet despite the continued relevance of indigenous-working class solidarity in twenty-first century Bolivia, *Ángeles* pointedly makes no reference to such macro-political concerns. Instead it focuses on the fundamental betrayal of any Indian who abandons his historical and cultural identity in order to buy into the national myth of *mestizaje*. Unlike both *Yawar Mallku* and *La nación*, agency ultimately lies in the hands of the brother who has never scorned his ancestry. The expressly *political* dimension of this confrontation is, it would seem, so deeply entrenched as to go without saying.

It is not, though, my intention to construct a Manichean opposition whereby the films of the New Latin American Cinema (and by extension, the contemporary productions of the Ukamau Group) orient themselves with relation to European standards and national politics, and therefore can appeal to bourgeois tastes, while indigenous video evades incorporation into intellectual circles by being indifferent to the subversion or otherwise of mainstream representational forms, and carrying out locally or ethnically specific politics. To do so would be to commit a series of gross oversimplifications of the type that this thesis argues extensively against. Even so, discussions surrounding Jorge Sanjinés' two latest films, *Para recibir el canto de los pájaros* and *Los hijos del último jardín*, have, perhaps fittingly, evoked something of

the dichotomous nature of some debates about class and ethnicity in the 1970s. While some critics have praised the Bolivian director for his continuing commitment to revealing the hypocrisy of Eurocentric bourgeois attitudes and the virtues of indigenous values (Guzmán 1995; Susz 2004), others have criticised the films for much the same reasons: a schematic approach to racial conflict and improbably unambiguous characters (Echalar 1995; Portugal 1995; Basualdo 2004).

It seems clear, though, that these latest films (particularly *Canto*) have met with more tepid reactions among Bolivian 'mainstream' audiences and critics than did their predecessors – a reaction that, according to Jorge Sanjinés and his collaborators, are symptomatic of an 'alienated' non-indigenous middle class deflecting criticism of their own lack of cultural identity and racist ignorance of indigenous culture back onto technical aspects of the film.[37] Given that both of these films make more direct attacks on the urban bourgeoisies than the previous militant films, which focus on the problems of indigenous communities, this may well be true. But, as Gumucio points out, '*Yawar Mallku* [...] convinced us all with its unambiguous, black-and-white thesis, which does not allow us to gain empathy or a psychological understanding of its characters. And yet it is a work of extraordinary power, which revealed a highly talented cineaste to the world' (Gumucio 1995). For Gumucio it is *Canto*'s unevenness and narrative weakness that cost it its national plaudits, the fact that 'it doesn't capture the spectator' – in other words, its failure to conform, as did the previous films, to the supposedly 'universal' standards of quality that govern the international reception (and distribution) of films. The problem with *Canto*, perhaps, is that it fails to demonstrate to the world that Bolivia too can produce globally marketable art cinema.

Sanjinés' and Pérez's claims that both films were warmly received by politicised 'popular' student and proletarian audiences suggest that for those (disenfranchised)

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[37] Conversations with César Pérez, 2004; Jorge Sanjinés 1995.

audiences, aesthetic accomplishment and narrative ambiguity matter less than the political imperative of seeing their problems reflected on the silver screen.[38] Meanwhile for those (paying) audiences who determine national and international success, it would seem, an adverse political standpoint can perhaps be forgiven in exchange for the stamp of aesthetic quality. Yet when the harshly political is not attenuated by elaborate aesthetic wrapping, it becomes indigestible. Iván Sanjinés has noted that some indigenous videos have been able to gain wide television distribution thanks to mainstream taste for well-crafted stereotype, while more straightforwardly political productions have suffered:

> The West is seeking out the indigenous world now [...] [Indigenous people] want people to know about them, they want to be on television – these stories are being shown on television now [...] It's the National Channel, it gets everywhere by satellite. And they're made in a way that makes them very attractive, people think indigenous video is very basic, very badly made. [...] Commercial Bolivian television wants to show [some indigenous videos] now, but only the fiction and the pretty stuff, the cultural things, music, dances. They don't want the political side, the ones about marches, problems, stone fights. (Iván Sanjinés and Marta Rodríguez 2002)

In any case, CEFREC's experiences as described here show that even communities with little or no training or background in film language or history are more than capable of challenging the epistemological assumptions that supposedly underlie audiovisual media. Schiwy takes to task writers, such as James Weiner, who claim that indigenous people risk contaminating their cultural integrity by using video, since Western technology necessarily reproduces the alienation of a 'specularized' capitalist culture (2002a: 301-307). For Schiwy, Weiner erects a barrier between a Western society saturated with technological mediation, and a utopically-imagined indigenous world that lacks 'mediating technologies of knowledge' (2002a: 303).[39] This formulation not only ignores pre-Columbian systems of mediating information such as

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[38] Conversations with César Pérez, 2004; Jorge Sanjinés 1995.

[39] Schiwy here refers to Weiner's article 'Televisualist Anthropology. Representation, Aesthetics, Politics'. *Current Anthropology* 38.2 (1997): 197-235.

glyphs, codices, weavings and *kipus*; it also erects an ethnocentric cultural hierarchy between 'mediated' Western culture, associated with literacy, and 'pre-mediation' Andean societies, associated with orality. Since 'mediating technology' is seen as a prerequisite for the production of knowledge, argues Schiwy, Weiner's position is effectively a veiled apology for Western 'anthropology as a critical discourse and indigenous societies as object of study and utopic desire' (2002a: 306).

Such a view also perpetuates the ethnocentric assumptions underlying Western academia's subdivision of objects of study into disciplines: indigenous media are worthy of study only as anthropological artefacts that can intimate some obscure 'truth' about an exotic society, while 'high art' is the reserve of the Western or Western-inspired cinema that tends to dominate Film Studies syllabi (Schiwy 2002a: 21; Guneratne 2003). For Shohat and Stam, what is conceived of as the West 'organizes knowledge in ways flattering to the Eurocentric imaginary': if it flatters the West to believe it has a monopoly on art, this conviction defines the global scope of its cultural practices (1994: 14). We thus return to Sarlo's concern over a Cultural Studies approach that tends to frame the study and selection of Latin American cinema in general in European and North American academic and film festival circles, seen as sociological or even anthropological artefacts rather than aesthetic discourses (Sarlo 2003). I would argue that to assign indigenous media to an inferior category of artefact, as opposed to the artistic expression to which fifty years of Western academic film studies have elevated cinema, is to overlook Burch's insight that notions of aesthetic taste are to a large extent governed by the economic, social, and cultural codes by which we live. As the contradictory reactions to the films of the Ukamau Group in recent years seem to suggest, what is deemed aesthetically pleasing is at least partly determined by where we stand politically and culturally as regards the work in question.

Drawing on the Subaltern Studies framework of the likes of Walter Mignolo, Aníbal Quijano and Silvia Rivera, and ultimately on Foucault's analysis of the power/knowledge nexus, Schiwy and Ennis therefore seek to 'rethink the geopolitics of knowledge' whereby North American or European universities are assumed to be politically neutral producers of knowledge about the entire world (2002: 9). These writers urge us to look behind the academy's zealous project of interpretation of interpreting foreign culture, and warn that 'the leftist academy's use of capitalist resources affirm national or global (state) institutions [such as the Ford, Rockefeller and Fulbright foundations] and the epistemic designs on which they are grounded'. They advocate shifting the centre of theoretical gravity towards 'knowledges' produced independently of those institutions (although sometimes, as they admit, with the support of international NGOs), such as the La Paz-based Workshop for Oral History (THOA), or the intellectual output of the Nasa (Paez) in Colombia. In the same way that indigenous (and sometimes, *indigenista*) filmmakers relativise taste and aesthetic quality, academics such as Schiwy and Ennis relativise 'universal' (Eurocentric) theory, acknowledging that any knowledge production comes from a particular political and cultural juncture. As Schiwy argues elsewhere in relation to Doris Sommer's reading of the world-famous testimony, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú*, indigenous testimony (at least in this case) 'seeks to show that western knowledges are partial, always incomplete and perhaps not even capable of understanding anything that cannot be subsumed by the logic of its reasoning' (2002b: 114-115).

Strategic and Inappropriate Others

In a 1992 article the Bolivian sociologist and filmmaker Silvia Rivera, herself a member of the THOA, foregrounds the operations of power underlying the production of academic knowledge during recent decades in Bolivia and Peru. She opens her article

by discussing the formation of the Sendero Luminoso in 1973 – the same juncture in Peruvian history at which Jorge Sanjinés made *El enemigo principal* in the Ayacucho highlands. Yet whereas the Ukamau Group's film portrays the indigenous peasants as politically naïve in comparison to the vanguard urban guerrilleros who (like Jorge Sanjinés and his team) have a more informed understanding of imperialism, Rivera argues that *senderismo*, protagonised to a great extent by Quechua peasants, presented a major challenge to Marxist sociologists and anthropologists who proved unable to account for the movement's success.[40] In *Enemigo*, *guerrilleros* and Indians alike suffer out of a failure to properly resolve their differing agendas into a coherent revolutionary programme; but Rivera's article suggests that the Sendero phenomenon eventually uprooted the very foundations of Marxist thought on social change. She points out that, whereas Peruvian Marxist social scientists had previously tended to subordinate ethnicity to the more 'pressing' matter of class, *senderismo* caused the intellectual left to realise the need to 'overcome the idea of "integration" and "syncretism" as a gradual and conflict-free process' (1992: 101). Peru's Marxist left, unlike that of Bolivia under the 1970s Bánzer dictatorship, had at least partly absorbed the ethnically-focused campaigns of indigenous groups; and the left as a whole had in turn allowed itself to be co-opted by a corporatist and nationalistic national-revolutionary state. The radicalised *kataristas* in 1970s Bolivia, on the other hand, had operated in clandestine conditions, and therefore in (relative) intellectual autonomy from either the Marxist left or the state (see ch. 3).

For Rivera, the intellectual legacy of *senderismo* is that it compelled the Peruvian left to account for 'the colonial dialectics that the dominant State and culture

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[40] In fact Sanjinés, Óscar Zambrano and Mario Arrieta's script for *Enemigo* was based not on the emerging Sendero, which was at that point in the early stages of gathering an ultimately wide constituency of grassroots support among indigenous peasants, but on a book written by Héctor Béjar (1973) about the failed 1965 ELN guerrilla uprising in the Ayacucho region. Unlike the Sendero, the ELN had never managed to rally local support in Quechua communities. Had the film focused on the Sendero, and possibly made a few years later, it might have portrayed the Indians in a rather different light.

has imposed as a framework for the formation of identities, both for the *mestizo* sectors and for the dominated peoples and cultures' (1992: 101). The wider implication for the social sciences is that overarching, exogenous interpretive frameworks are no longer thought to be viable, whether from the outmoded perspective of Marxism, or from the new co-optive paradigm that clamours to protect the Indians under the banner of parliamentary multiculturalism.[41] For Rivera, the Bolivian social sciences must today choose between acting as a legitimising tool of the 'new liberal and authoritarian political projects of domination' and taking a pro-active stance in support of indigenous claims, but *without* seeking to steal indigenous protagonism of those movements (1992: 102).

Both here and elsewhere, Rivera supports her arguments with a wide range of sources from Andean oral history (such as the documents produced by the THOA), as well as texts written by European and North American sociologists and anthropologists about Bolivia. As such, she tacitly acknowledges her own location as a mediator between 'knowledges' originating within and beyond the Andean sphere. Her position is akin to Javier Sanjinés' 'indigenous exteriority' (2004: 10), enunciated from the margins of dominant discourse, both comprehending and rejecting the normalised 'vanishing point' towards progress that Western modernity promotes.[42] In another article she describes Marxist interpretations of Indian politics, society and history as little better than the 'political *pongueaje*' imposed by governments seeking to co-opt indigenous support to consolidate national power structures (1987: 57). On the other

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[41] In 1994 (two years after Rivera's article was published) Bolivia adopted a new 'multiethnic and pluricultural' constitution and Law of Popular Participation that greatly expanded state recognition of indigenous territorial, political and juridical claims, and, for a brief time at least, heralded a new period of cooperation between the now fiercely neoliberal MNR, under President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, and the Katarista Aymaras, represented by Sánchez de Lozada's vice-president, Víctor Hugo Cárdenas. See Albó (1994) and Klein (2003: 239-265). For a more optimistic account of Bolivian and Colombian 'multicultural constitutionalism', highlighting its empowerment (albeit limited) of indigenous peoples and its partial erosion of exclusionary national discourses, see Van Cott (2000: particularly 257-280).

[42] I do not wish to suggest that Rivera rejects Western social sciences out of hand as colonialist discourse; indeed she cites much of it approvingly. I wish only to highlight her position as an intellectual standing at the porous border between indigenous and non-indigenous thought.

hand, with the THOA's oral history, 'the Aymara themselves sound out links with non-Aymara intellectuals, select their potential allies and thus invert the long tradition of creole manipulation of Indians' (Rivera 1987: 57). For Rivera oral history does not, in the manner of the Western academy, make a pretence of objectivity that cloaks its implicit colonial framework; rather, it highlights the interplay and interpenetration between the researcher and their interlocutors. It also takes an active stance in favour of indigenous demands for citizenship and/or cultural and territorial autonomy.

The epistemic confrontation that takes place at the heart of the work of a figure such as Silvia Rivera, I would argue, bears striking similarities to that which informs the video-making practice in contemporary Colombia of Marta Rodríguez – herself a trained anthropologist who rejected the 'apolitical' academicism of her discipline. In documentaries such as *Memoria viva* (1993) and *La hoja sagrada* (2002), made with indigenous communities in the Cauca, or *Nunca más/Never Again* (2001), made with displaced black communities from Urabá and Chocó, Rodríguez and her small Bogotá-based team act as technological, aesthetic and logistical mediators of orally-transmitted knowledge, social experience and historical memory. To a limited extent, these films make use of, and circulate within, mainstream Colombian society – for instance the presence of some them in the 'Maletas del cine colombiano' or the deal struck with national television for *La hoja sagrada* (see ch. 1). Yet as I shall argue here, through their partisan commitment to the political causes of their protagonists, the stories, events and testimonies that they bear intervene critically and actively in the process whereby the nation is 'imagined'. They do not uncritically accept the co-optive (neo)liberal and national narratives of *mestizo* multiculturalism. But on the other hand, they do not adopt a Manichean oppositional stance that supposes that political progress can only be made by functioning solely from outside dominant national cultural/ideological narratives.[43]

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[43] This approach can thus be contrasted with Rodríguez and Silva's outright rejection in the 1970s of state initiatives such as *sobreprecio* (see chs. 2-3 above).

Memoria viva, of which Marta Rodríguez and Iván Sanjinés are credited as directors, all but breaks down entirely the residual hierarchies between filmmakers and subjects, between sound and image, and between diegetic and non-diegetic narratives, which seeped through the film-texts of *Planas* and *Nuestra voz*. The sound-track here is given over entirely to the voices and music of the inhabitants of Caloto, a Cauca indigenous community that suffered a massacre of twenty of its numbers in December 1991, and of the local, regional and national indigenous political movements that rallied round its calls for justice. The 25 minute-long video uses footage shot by the Caucan cameramen Antonio Palechor and Manuel Sánchez in the immediate aftermath of the killings, interviews filmed bsy Rodríguez and Sanjinés in Caloto on the first anniversary of the massacre, and images filmed by Manuel Sánchez during and after a violent confrontation between Indians and the national police in October 1992. Since there is no extra-diegetic voice-over to anchor these three distinct moments, which are edited together in non-linear fashion, the narrative is not readily comprehensible to an outsider with no previous knowledge of the situation. Yet for those who have lived these experiences first-hand, the connections among them are all too painfully clear.[44]

The most harrowing sequence of the film – whose editing uses nothing of *Nuestra voz*'s poetic rhythmic montage or contrapuntal and asynchronous sound – comes towards the middle, when the viewer is party to the juddering, sometimes blurred, but horrifyingly impacting scenes of the corpses lined up in Caloto following the killings. Palechor and Sánchez interview an eyewitness who gives his gruesome testimony of the events, while the Hi-8 footage covers the interview, and pans about the scenes around them. This is not the high drama of a reconstructed massacre (à la *Coraje del pueblo*), but rather its rather unsettlingly calm, almost quotidian aftermath. The

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[44] For more details on the filming and editing of *Memoria viva*, which resulted partly from Rodríguez and Sanjinés' UNESCO workshop in Popayán in 1991, and for general background on the film, see Gómez (1996a and 1996b); Rodríguez (2002) Sanjinés and Rodríguez (2002); Ruffinelli (2003a); and Martha Muñoz Vásquez's *Historia debida* programme for Universidad Nacional Televisión (n.d.).

camera picks out children who stare back blankly at the camera (are they uncomprehending, are they hiding their pain, can the filmed image fathom such things…?), and Caloto's inhabitants gather round, some looking on, some trying to identify the dead. Although it was policemen who, by witnesses' accounts, perpetrated the massacre, here some policemen mill around unhindered, not quite knowing what to do yet trying somehow to stamp authority on the situation.

A television news report of this type of event (in Colombia or elsewhere), pressed for time by the demands of the market, might focus on the grisly 'money shot' of the dead while the reporter gives an overview of the events, before cutting to an all-too-brief comment from an eyewitness.[45] Here the mutilated bodies themselves are seen only for a lingering moment, although even this is enough to be nauseating. They are set in the context of those who mourn them: we see extreme long-shots of the crowd pan across to fleeting close-ups of those caught in the midst of their private moments of anguish; a sudden cut to a helicopter flying overhead seems to wonder what the largely absent authorities will do about the situation. Despite the crude violence with which the dead were treated (some were disfigured with machetes), their dignity is almost immediately restored: we see shots of the coffins in which they were buried; their funeral parade; the crosses at which their loved ones deposit flowers in their memory.

Memoria viva makes no pretence that Sánchez and Palechor's footage alone gives a simple, direct access to the reality of the event – indeed, it was they who approached Rodríguez with their footage to ask her to help them edit it, presumably since they considered it to be neither useful nor watchable in its raw form.[46]

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[45] Santiago Andrés Gómez argues that Colombian television would not even broadcast such shocking images in the first place: the national networks 'only show the charred corpses of soldiers in Nariño, for instance; never the kind of attack that might damage, rather than boost, the *clean conscience of the Colombians*' (1996b: 108, emphasis in original). For a profound reflection on the politics of representing violence on Colombian television, see Óscar Campo's 2002 video, *Noticias de guerra en Colombia* (War Reporting in Colombia).

[46] However, Palechor had already made a preliminary cut of the footage, which he entitled *Crónica de una masacre anunciada/Chronicle of a Massacre Foretold* (Gómez 1996a: 98). Furthermore, a 15-minute video named *Caloto: un año después* (1992) was produced by CRIC, and is distributed in Bogotá by

Interspersed with the scenes of Caloto are moments from an indoor interview filmed by Rodríguez and Sanjinés a year later with Jesús Enrique Piñakué, at that time the vice-president of the CRIC. Piñakué's intelligent, shrewd, collected and indignant account of the Caloto massacre and its background lends these violent scenes a historical and political depth that eloquently pins blame for the events on a process of social decay originating outside indigenous society, while expressing indigenous society's own determination to resist it. 'In our society,' reflects Piñakué, 'in our communities, throughout Latin America, and above all in Colombia, people have been taught to feel terrified, to respect fear as something inevitable, not to protest, not to express what we truly think and feel. We're not afraid. What we do fear is that our cultures, our peoples, could become extinct'. The truth cannot even be approached through gazing morbidly at these images; by setting them against Piñakué's account of the past and future of the Caucan Indians, we cannot claim direct access to a traumatic past. But we *can* inscribe the documentation of that past, and the emotion it evokes in those who view this video, into the ongoing process of political and social change – learning to overcome fear, acquiring a collective will to save one's culture from extinction.

The horror of the images described above are both offset and intensified by Piñakué's words on the soundtrack, which rather than simply confirming or describing what we see, offer a spectre of the images in front of us, filtered by time (the one year that has passed since the event), space (the distance between the cameramen and the viewer) and channelled into a viable political sentiment for the future.

> Naked, with incredible wounds, without arms, without legs, some of them without a face. And then when they brought out the coffins, when they lined them up, my hatred was such that I preferred to fuel it with the expressions of rage and pain that were left imprinted upon the faces of every one of those people in the coffins, because they're coffins that

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ONIC (Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia) and the charity CINEP (Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular). It is noticeable that *Caloto* does make an extensive use of a first-person voice-over narrator, which announces the 'truth' of the situation and denounces the continued impunity of the perpetrators of the violence.

> have a glass panel, you can see their faces. It was a grimace of the anguish and despair of the indigenous person that wants nothing more than to have their little piece of land, and they had to die like that. There's no way that can be justified.

Piñakué is a Nasa leader who, like Javier Sanjinés' 'two-eyed' intellectual, or Walter Mignolo's 'border thinker', is conversant with both indigenous and non-indigenous political, social and cultural systems, and uses this knowledge to the Indian subaltern's advantage (Mignolo 2001; Javier Sanjinés 2004: 31). Later on in *Memoria viva* he reflects on the contrasts between traditional Nasa and national Colombian systems of governance, using his privileged perspective of living simultaneously in two different societies to analyse both systems alongside one another. He unequivocally places the blame not on the specific police authorities who pulled the triggers of the guns that killed the Caloto villagers, or on the individual government officials whose incompetence prevents a proper inquiry, but on an endemic, societal mechanism that upsets the natural order of Indian society.

Reversing the assumption of the Latin American positivists that only white or *mestizo* society can solve the 'problem' that the Indians represent to national cohesion, Piñakué proposes how Indian society might serve as a potential model for the *whole* of Colombian society to overcome its own internal difficulties. Not unlike Jorge Sanjinés' latest fiction feature *Los hijos del último jardín* (2004), indigenous values are compared favourably, in somewhat idealised terms, with the corruption and individualism of the state and of non-indigenous society. But in the Ukamau Group's film, the wise *altiplano* community that serves as the moral salvation of the young urban protagonists occupies an entirely separate space to the city: a long and treacherous journey is required to arrive there, and the Aymara community appear as a civilisation almost untouched by urban vice. By contrast the evocations by Piñakué and by the CRIC of indigenous governance constantly emphasise the ongoing, traumatic contact between indigenous and non-indigenous societies, and the consequent gradual erosion of cultural awareness.

In *La hoja sagrada*, we see that feuds between neighbouring indigenous communities have led to death and destruction: the social decay and 'loss of identity' caused by the illegal drug trade has hit Paeces and Guambianos as much as (if not more than) other sectors of Colombian society.

Thus the function of Piñakué's evocation of indigenous democracy in *Memoria viva* is therefore to construct an aspirational basis upon which a viable future (communal, national) society might be built. As Manuel Sánchez's images show the disturbing scenes of bloodied faces and imprisoned children in the aftermath of the 'Encounter of the Two Worlds' protest, Piñakué again begins to speak about the indigenous conception of authority, placing the repression of the Colombian state in stark contrast to the ideal form of government that the indigenous movement would like to implement:

> We understand authority as the potential to generate respect, whilst the kind of authority as conceived by this society, the kind that is imposed on us, is an authority that represses. To govern is to serve, it's to put ourselves *beneath* the community. But for these people, to govern is to be above, to govern is to use power in order to impose. Here power lies in the community, not in a few individuals. If between us we manage little by little to work towards an ideal form of government, I think we will be able to do away with the justification of war as being the ultimate way to bring peace.

The timing of his words here is particularly poignant, coming as they do just one year after Colombia adopted a new 'multicultural' constitution in 1991, which afforded official (albeit limited) state recognition of indigenous linguistic, religious, juridical, cultural, territorial and political claims; promised to 'protect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation'; and legislated for five indigenous members to be elected to the national Congress.[47] The latter part of *Memoria viva* (Manuel Sánchez's footage) documents an indigenous march on 12 October 1992, which tried to take the Pan-American Highway as part of the continent-wide protests timed to coincide with

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[47] Presidencia de la República (1991). Extracts of those chapters of the constitution relating to indigenous peoples are available in English translation in Avirama and Márquez (1994: 103-105).

the much-publicised 'Encounter of Two Worlds' celebrations to mark the 500th anniversary of the European arrival in the 'New World'. The protest obviously clashed with the official version of a harmonious and equitable encounter between two mutually curious and respectful peoples, and as Sánchez's images testify, the marchers were met with the tanks and bullets of the national police. The multiculturalist rhetoric of both the 1991 Constitution and the 1992 'Encounter' celebrations might well be seen as an apparently more inclusive re-packaging of the national myth of *mestizaje*, signalling some small legislative victories but without upsetting the deep-set racial hierarchies of Colombian society (Avirama and Márquez 1994; Wade 2005: 256).

As Peter Wade argues, *mestizaje* in Colombia is traditionally understood as 'a morally neutral convergence of three races [white, black and Indian] onto a nonhierarchized middle ground' (1993: 19).[48] In fact, he writes, *mestizaje* implies not a neutral mixture but a morally hierarchical movement whereby the 'ascent' from the Indian and black corners, towards the aspirational 'white' apex of Colombia's racial triangle, implies social progress. This social-racial mobility is, for Wade, encoded in markers of social relations, such as cultural syncretism and appropriation, and the 'moral topography' of geographical space (1993: 43). In terms of this latter category, the nineteenth-century colonisation of rural areas to serve the export-agriculture booms held with it the notion of expanding the frontier of white-identified civilisation: the expanding urban centre was seen as 'an expansion of progress and civilization into previously benighted areas [...], drawing the periphery into the process of *mestizaje*, understood as *blanqueamiento* [whitening]' (1993: 60-61). This same racialised 'moral topography' enables blacks (and we might add Indians) living in the cities to be seen approvingly as having made a positive movement from the primitive periphery to the

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[48] For Wade, post-Independence racial discourses in Colombia have been characterised by two main competing ideologies. Alongside *mestizaje* is that of 'whitening', which envisages 'a future in which blackness and indianness are not only absorbed but also *erased* from the national panorama, giving rise to a *whitened mestizo* nation' (1993: 19).

modernising metropolis, even as their cultural forms (ancestral 'magical' beliefs, rhythmic music), fiercely defended by those urban immigrants, becomes incorporated into *mestizo* society's fascination with its internal Others. In the case of blacks, Wade proposes, this fascination manifests itself in terms of an admiration for potent black sensuality and eroticism, betraying 'a white culture that secretly fears its alienation from what it defines as baser, cruder aspects of life, even while it trumpets its achievements in more refined and "cultured" realms' (1993: 248). In turn Indian cultures, as in many other Latin American countries, have been garbed in a national emblematic status that constitutes 'a badge of Latin American originality' (1993: 33), even while political and military realities have seen ancestral rights and lands (the *resguardos*) taken away.

The massacre documented in *Memoria viva* occurred after the CRIC, spurred on both by the rights enshrined in the 1991 constitution and by the long memory of indigenous struggles for land, had 'recuperated' the El Nilo estate in northern Cauca from a local landowner as part of an ancestral *resguardo*. It is most likely that the hooded policemen who, according to Rodríguez, committed the massacre were pursuing purely financial interests rather than any goal of anti-indigenous cultural expansionism; the area had recently fallen into the hands of drug traffickers (Sanjinés and Rodríguez 2002). But the fact that the Indians responded with such actions as occupying the Pan-American Highway – itself a site symbolising the utopian dreams of modernity that early twentieth century national elites believed science and continental unity could deliver – is highly suggestive of a politics of reclaiming a geographical space of self-determination within the national sphere. The scenes of the 1992 protest in this film show official multiculturalism floundering, while the banners held up by the Indian marchers betray an acute awareness that the rights pronounced in the new constitution may well be little more than political tokenism.

In *Memoria viva*, as well as in other videos made by/about the Cauca Indians (*Los hijos del trueno*, *La hoja sagrada*), the protagonists transmit a strong sense that the national authorities consider the violation of indigenous territory unworthy of intervention. The Guambiano participants in *La hoja sagrada* despair at the government's insistence on fumigating their lands, despite the widespread success of the manual poppy eradication process that the indigenous authorities had carried out. One woman reflects in the film that while the government supposedly consults with local communities in order to ensure eradication policies are properly comprehended and enacted, that rule appears not to apply to Indians: 'Here the government has never had any meetings with the indigenous people so we can see what's good about it. When the law comes, it's just "the law is like that, and you have to comply." We'd never seen so much violence against indigenous people. This government's plan is to finish off the indigenous people'.

A Guambiano senator shifts the debate in the film onto an international plane, arguing that

> Illegal crops and drug trafficking are international problems. Governments and nations must share responsibility. But in Cauca and Colombia, why do they have to fumigate? At what cost? Because we still can't see any policies to control the markets for drug trafficking that exist in the industrialised countries. [...] They want to finish off the Andean region and the Amazonian basin. So we've defended the Colombian territory, we've defended the Amazonian basin. And we're going to carry on defending it.

For him, the Colombian and US governments' fumigation policy shifts the responsibility for heroin addiction in the industrialised world onto supposedly 'backward' rural indigenous territories, not now merely in the name of the national pushing-back of the frontiers of civilisation, but in a putrid alliance with transnational capital and political power. Therefore, even as the national government can trumpet its noble defence of (picturesque) indigenous cultural, political, territorial and juridical structures, the racial hierarchies underlying mainstream society's ambivalent feelings

towards indigenous peoples mean that indigenous lives and territories can be quietly liquidated in the name of progress. If the elimination of the poppy crops that hold the country back from development and modernity mean that a few antediluvian Indians are uprooted from their homes, it would appear, nobody much will care. By claiming a small slice of the national and global audiovisual space through Rodríguez's films, Paeces and Guambianos resist the capitalist economy's racially-loaded elimination of difference.

As such, films such as *La hoja sagrada* and *Memoria viva* constitute a defiant stand against the racial and topographical trashing to which national and global discourses of progress subject indigenous communities. If, as King argues, New Cinemas emerged in 1960s Latin America out of a sense that society was riding the crest of the wave of modernity – whether that modernity was conceived on the model of capitalist developmentalism or of the Cuban revolution – recent video booms have in many ways negated the very concept of modernity as we know it (King 1990: 65-78). Films such as *Yawar Mallku* or *Campesinos* brought 'the shadow side of the dream of progress' to the attention of the world (King 1990: 68): the notion that progress could, through *indigenista*-Marxist revolution, be brought about. Yet in *La hoja sagrada* or *Memoria viva*, the heirs of those 1960s models of economic and political modernity – export capitalism and Marxist guerrillas – have struck a grotesque accord that leaves ordinary people shot dead, fumigated and displaced.[49]

Resisting the violent turn of Colombian modernity, Jesús Enrique Piñakué is, in Rappaport's terms, an 'inappropriate Other' who 'juxtaposes indigenous and metropolitan discourses and identities in an effort to produce discomfort', who 'forces other Colombians to rethink what "indigenous" means, insisting that they engage the cultural pluralism to which they have paid lipservice over the past decade' (Rappaport

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[49] For overviews and analyses of the complex grid of overlapping interests and pacts between the Colombian guerrilla and the illegal narcotics industry, see, for instance, Richani (1997); and Chernick (1999).

2003: 318). To think of indigenous audiovisual production in similar terms is a useful way of circumventing the totalising notion that, even if multiculturalism constitutes for high-level politicians little more than empty rhetoric aimed at legitimating their position, to harness the cultural-communicational infrastructures that it throws up necessarily implies surrendering to co-optive national discourses.

By way of example, *La hoja sagrada* was, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, commissioned by the Colombian Culture Ministry's 'Diálogos de Nación' television series, itself clearly a product of the state's attempt to 'multiculturalise' the national audiovisual space along the lines of the 1991 constitution. According to a Ministry bureaucrat and filmmaker, the 2000 series (aired on terrestrial national television) aimed, 'via the diverse perspectives of national documentarists, to *take the pulse of the country* from local and regional viewpoints, to draw up a map of what we are, what we have been, and to answer the question of what constitutes our collective heritage that must be recognised, appropriated, used and recreated' (Arango Valencia y Buenaventura 2004: 42, emphasis in original). The *videasta* Daniel Piñakué has also spoken of the potential for the regional TV channels Telepacífico, Telecaribe and Teleantioquia, as well as low-power community television networks, to disseminate the autonomously produced Hi-8 video work of indigenous communities (as quoted in Rodríguez 2002). The decentralisation of the national televisual sphere that led to the creation of these spaces should be understood in the context of the decline of FOCINE in the late 1980s, when the old model of the state funding relatively large-scale cinema productions gave way to the more flexible and cost-efficient business of supporting low-budget productions for either regional or national state-run television.[50] It would appear to be no coincidence that the opening of these regional and local 'spaces'

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[50] This shift in the state's role in documentary production in Colombia was by no means a clear-cut or instantaneous process. As early as 1982 FOCINE began producing the *Yurupari* series (1982-1987) directed by Gloria Triana, expository and observational anthropological documentaries made on 16mm but for television, showing a mainstream audience slices of popular culture from every corner of Colombia.

coincided with the assemblage of a multicultural state that sought to legitimate itself by being seen to give adequate representation to the full scope of regional and ethnic diversity encompassed within its borders. The remit of another proposed documentary series, *Polifonías*, states even more clearly the extent to which a multicultural television production policy aimed to help shore up a sense of nation-ness out of regional and ethnic diversity, in the face of the late-twentieth century crisis in nationhood brought about by accelerated globalisation:

> To promote the valorisation of what is ours, as a way of successfully confronting the cultural processes of globalisation, by seeking to strengthen regional and local identities via audiovisual narratives which explore the ways in which the representations and symbols of our nationality are lived in the various regions.[51]

It therefore seems reasonable to say that the purported democratisation of the audiovisual sphere in Bolivia (as I suggested earlier in this chapter) and Colombia is mediated by and framed within the political project of multiculturalism.[52] Yet this is not to say that any victories that subaltern filmmakers achieve are reducible to an apologia for a global neoliberal capitalism. Nor does it mean that, faced with a choice between entering into and remaining sealed off from mechanisms of power, they resort solely to essentialising versions of their own political and cultural visions as a way of 'not losing ground'. One vital insight of Peter Wade's study of race in Colombia is that, for all that 'white' society projects its own fantasies onto its racial Others, the latter are (and again, Wade refers here specifically to Colombian blacks) much more than 'passive screens' onto which whites play out their desires:

> The possibility also exists for [blacks] to manipulate their understanding of the whites' understanding of them in order to reverse, albeit momentarily, the roles of domination and make the whites not only

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[51] Quoted by Arango Valencia (2004: 41). *Polifonías*, however, failed to win approval by the Comisión Nacional de Televisión and did not go ahead.

[52] For Colombian critics and filmmakers on the 'personalisation' or 'humanisation' of documentary in the video age see, for example, Arbeláez (2003), Campo (2004), and Gutiérrez Cortés and Aguilera Toro (2004). For indigenous *videastas*' use of regional and community television, see the Plan Nacional's website, as well as articles in its official publication *Entre culturas* (for instance, 'Se anuncia la primera experiencia...' 2002).

> physically but morally slaves to their dexterity and prowess as dancers. casting them as clumsy outsiders in a small world of "natural" dancers or skillful sportspeople (1993: 249).

In the same way that blacks can take possession of the ambivalent stereotypes via which white society imagines them, indigenous Colombians (whether leaders or not) who speak through the films of Rodríguez, or those of the CRIC or Sol y Tierra, frequently employ caricatured visions of Indian society that aim to empower indigenous viewers by showing the rest of society that they, at least, have some vestige of a social order that gives them dignity and cohesion. Rappaport argues that indigenous intellectuals in Colombia 'articulate seemingly essentialist arguments within highly constructionist frameworks' (2003: 322), strategically embracing the kind of essentialist discourses that achieve concrete political goals (such as affirmative action, or legislative rights in the constitution), while at the same time, in Stuart Hall's words, performing 'not the so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms-with our "routes"' (1996b: 4). Likewise indigenous people in Latin America see video and television strategically. If it arrived as an imposition of cultural imperialism, and has become so inured into their cultures as to become part of their identities, it must be put to the service of preserving and strengthening, rather than destroying, those cultures.[53] If that means that both the formal devices and the infrastructures of those media must be adapted to a new reality, indigenous filmmakers have proved extremely adept at performing such transformations.

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[53] Ginsburg (1991) argues a similar point in relation to Inuit and Aboriginal media in Canada and Australia respectively.

Conclusion

The radical uses of media

As Ginsburg reminds us, while the media serve to bolster the cultural selfhood of indigenous cultures, their eponymous function is to mediate across boundaries. Indigenous peoples might be forgiven for associating the mainstream media with co-opting and disfiguring cultural mediations: vanguard anthropologists, sociologists or political filmmakers arriving to inform on far-flung, primitive communities might be little better than those nineteenth-century Colombian colonists who pushed back the frontiers of civilisation in the name of modernity; or than Bolivian positivist *indigenistas* who employed the Indian as a national trope of emblematic but surpassed barbarity. She argues, though, that indigenous media does not make spatial and cultural mediations that promote the interests of ruling elites – such as 'interpreting' foreign cultures, in the manner of ethnographic film – but rather that they mediate 'ruptures of time and history – to heal disruptions in cultural knowledge, historical memory, and identity between generations' (1991: 104). One Purepecha Indian from Mexico suggests as much, commenting on the vital role that television has acquired in some communities:

> Television has found its way into the bosom of the indigenous family in our regions... Now television has taken the place of the ancients, of our grandparents, who used to pass on knowledge and history, who told us the legends of our peoples, who taught us our own traditional medicine [...] Everything is getting lost now, our communities, because of the contact with universal culture, with dominant culture. [...] I think we should push television in a new direction, [...] to put in that box the knowledge of our peoples, the knowledge of our forebears. (quoted in Rodríguez 2002)

For this man at least, television serves as a tool of inter-generational memory. Hyper-mediated capitalist society has irrevocably altered social relations in indigenous

communities – yet he sees the instrument of that change not in apocalyptic terms, but as a potential receptacle for oral historiography.

Even so, the media's power to mediate across cultural and geographical boundaries – for their images to be rebounded *back* into mainstream society – may also work to indigenous imagemakers' advantage in a more concrete way, echoing in a sense the 'camera-gun' of the 1960s and 1970s Third Cinema. For the former Quintín Lame *guerrillero* Daniel Piñakué, the video cameras of Sol y Tierra have literally acquired the status of 'image-making weapons' that stop soldiers in their tracks, fearful that their abuses might become visible in the mainstream public sphere: the camera is 'no longer a weapon for killing, but a weapon to generate awareness and for informing people what's going on in this country'. On one occasion, he relates, the participants in a vast indigenous mobilisation was confronted with soldiers with guns; yet when the indigenous cameramen took out their equipment the soldiers put down their weapons.[1]

Such concrete, activist appropriation of the media stretches to an extreme Martín-Barbero's guardedly optimistic view that, beyond being objectified as nostalgic, primitive symbols of populist nationalism, or vilified for presenting an obstacle to development, indigenous cultures can constitute 'integral parts of the productive structure of capitalism, but with a meaning that is broader than these structures [...] [T]o close one's eyes to the broader cultural meaning of Indian identities would mean falling into the trap of attributing to capitalist logic the ability to absorb all present reality' (1993: 190). The case cited by Piñakué shows that present-day indigenous identities are not wholly separate from capitalism or modernity (in the manner, say, of Alcides Arguedas' *indigenismo*), but neither does their use of modernity's technological devices (such as video cameras) mean that they are merely reduced to an exotic signifier of capitalism's all-encompassing embrace. Within certain circumscribed situations,

[1] This paragraph quotes Marta Rodríguez's interview with Piñakué in Natagaima, Tolima, 1993 (quoted in Rodríguez 2002).

indigenous communicators can achieve concrete political goals through an active appropriation of the media, despite, or even because of, their inscription within capitalist society.

But what of the implications of the wider societal presence of such images? What happens when media that are intended to mediate through time and history are put to the service of mediating through space and culture – as is the case when CEFREC's videos are broadcast as 'folkloric' artefacts on mainstream television? How should we consider the Ukamau Group's films when they are screened in European film festivals, or the Fundación Cine Documental when it allows its films to be packaged and sold as national cultural heritage in the Culture Ministry's 'Maletas del cine colombiano'? For that matter, we cannot assume that there are no cultural boundaries to be mediated *within* the 'primary' exhibition circuits of indigenous communities, mining centres or urban proletarian circles. To assume that, say, *all* Aymara peasants, or *all* Guambianos, have a homogeneous conception of their own cultural milieu would amount to one more essentialism. The closing scenes of *La hoja sagrada*, showing the aftermath of a bloody struggle between two opposing Caucan indigenous factions, demonstrates that overcoming immediate cultural misunderstandings has more urgency than, perhaps, it does for the Inuit and Aboriginal communities studied by Ginsburg. As populations become dispersed through violence, poverty or the influence of the illegal drugs trade, and community structures break down, Colombian indigenous *resguardos* are increasingly characterised by a complex of competing social and cultural narratives, meaning that video must cross cultural boundaries within communities, meaning that they must at once cross both cultural *and* historical boundaries (Rodríguez n.d.). Moreover the networks of CEFREC, on a Bolivian national level, or of CLACPI, on a continental level, show that, say, highland Aymara and lowland Amazonian Indians have much to learn from one another's cultural experiences, as do Mayas from Mexico

and Mapuches from Chile. Surely, then, these networks – which also involve the efforts and observation of 'Western' NGOs, academics and educational organisations – entail a complex and simultaneous overlapping of temporal, historical and cultural mediations that at once harness and circumvent global structures of financial, political and cultural power.[2]

In a sense Martín-Barbero's argument concurs with Ginsburg's: rather than constituting a 'Faustian contract' with the technologies of capitalist society, indigenous use of the media enables the transformative creation of 'screen memories' (Ginsburg 1991, 2003). Video thus foregrounds and records communities' (sometimes) traumatic memories that have been erased by national narratives, thereby helping reconstruct cultural identity. But where Ginsburg views media primarily as the tools out of which identities and social relations can be forged and strengthened by inserting and receiving messages across their airwaves, Martín-Barbero sees the mediations themselves as *constitutive* of social relations:

> What we are trying to do is to remove the study of *reception* from the constraints of a type of communication conceived in terms of messages that circulate, of effects and reactions, to relocate the debate into the field of culture: of the *conflicts* that culture articulates, of the *mestizajes* that it weaves and the *anachronisms* that sustain it, and finally of the way in which hegemony and the resistances that it mobilises operate, and thus of rescuing the subaltern classes' strategies of appropriation and answering back (Martín-Barbero 2003: 307, emphasis in original).

Martín-Barbero emphasises the use to which media are put by those who consume it over the intentions of those who produce it. The media are thus seen not as diffusers of codified messages, but as a constituent part of a cultural sphere out of which people forge and alter their ever-evolving identities.

To address the questions that Martín-Barbero raises with respect to the films addressed in this study would require another thesis at least, and perhaps a methodology

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[2] For instance, the US Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian plays an important organisational role in indigenous film and video festivals, and hosts Native Networks, a large online resource centre on indigenous media in both English and Spanish. See www.nativenetworks.si.edu.

focused more on anthropological research than textual and contextual analysis. But Martín-Barbero's schema may signal a framework through which we might start to ask how these films intervene or participate in the process whereby cinema and television audiences – whether they identify as indigenous, *cholo*, *mestizo*, creole, white or otherwise – 'answer back' to the political and ideological structures by which they live. It may be able to give us some clues as to the way people interact with one of Jorge Sanjinés' militant *indigenista* masterpieces, or with one of Marta Rodríguez's grassroots videos – not as the ideal militant Third Cinema spectator, but as one who constructs their identity according to a whole range of media discourses, via all the vagaries of competing racial, class, gender and sexual identities. The types of *mestizajes* that might be weaved through the cultural uses of these films are what Wade refers to as *mestizaje*-as-'lived experience', as 'the construction of a mosaic' which, unlike official multiculturalism, 'allows the permanent re-combination of elements in persons and practices' (2005: 252).

Of course, as I argued in Chapter 1, these imagemakers' focus on process rather than text – their efforts to insert spectatorship into a social and cultural context – has often made the experience of their films more dialogical in practice than they may appear to the outsider. But little is known about the specific 'conflicts', '*mestizajes*' and 'anachronisms' that they actually *have* thrown up as their spectators have drawn upon them to perform 'permanent re-combination[s] of elements'. To be sure, both Jorge Sanjinés and his late producer Beatriz Palacios have taken great interest in spectators' reactions to their films, which have frequently led to alterations in their methodology. But such audience comments as the Ukamau Group has published tend merely to shore up stated authorial intentions; as politically-committed filmmakers advancing an agenda, they have not (nor is there any reason why they should) favoured 'aberrant'

readings.[3] As Fusco asks, 'how does a film [...] call upon your ethnic identity, or your racial identity, or your class position, or your profession, or your sexuality so as to generate identification? What happens when one category of your experience is pit against another?' (1989: 13) Because of restraints of time, finances and (sometimes) language, the present thesis is based largely on the filmed and published materials that I was able to consult during periods of research in La Paz, Bogotá and Medellín. A larger project might involve lengthier periods of research enabling me to speak to the protagonists and audiences of some of the films studied here, so that we might better understand how film has mediated both the encounter between divergent spheres of Bolivian and Colombian societies, and how it has intervened in the permanent reconstitution and rethinking of their viewers' political, cultural and communal identities.

In the sixteen years that have passed since Fusco wrote the words cited above, with Third Cinema and the New Latin American Cinema very much in mind, it would seem that studies that set about addressing these questions are, at least with relation to the vanguard cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s, still thin on the ground. It is, however, territory well trodden in recent years by Media and Film Studies more generally. Writing on what she calls 'post-Third-Worldist' media, Ella Shohat (2003: 74-75) provides a vital signpost that might lead us to enquire how the 'postmodern media' not only 'set agendas and frame debates' but, arguably, 'exist close to the very core of identity production'. Thus, even as they deterritorialise identity, they can also, for Shohat, 'fashion community and alternative affiliations' – for instance, by 'open[ing] up parallel spaces for anti-racist feminist transformation' (García Canclini 1990: 289-305; Shohat 2003: 74-75).

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[3] For audience comments, see Sanjinés and Ukamau Group (1979: 9-10 and 71-73); and Gamboa ed. (1999: 239-241).

The temptation in reading the arguments of Martín-Barbero or of Fusco is to tip the analytical scales so far towards reader/viewer agency and away from textual and contextual analysis as to overlook the real power hierarchies that operate in society and in texts – although this is not at all the intention of either writer. We might, for instance, become so enthralled with decoding subaltern appropriations of Mexican melodrama; lesbian readings of Hollywood comedies; or Colombian indigenous perspectives on Canadian ethnographic film, as to overlook the important role that intentionally and overtly political media play in processes of raising awareness of social problems. In Chapter 2 I suggested that the film *Ukamau* lies in tension somewhere between a melodramatic national-*indigenista* appropriation of the indigenous image, and an indigenous appropriation of national primitivist tropes – the impact that it actually has will depend on both the internal mechanics of the film itself *and* the situation of the viewer. Meanwhile Chapters 3 and 4 both show that in collectively-produced films such as *El coraje del pueblo* and *Nuestra voz de tierra*, the methodological hierarchies that define the interaction of filmmakers with subjects are intimately linked with the textual hierarchies that operate within films' internal structures, as well as with the social hierarchies that establish the terms on which films circulate socially. Subaltern viewers' ability to make external images their own does not exist in a vacuum – it is also a function of how those images are produced, assembled and disseminated.

Thus as Shohat and Stam remind us, 'while it is true that disempowered communities can decode dominant programming through a resistant perspective, they can do so only to the extent that their collective life and historical memory have provided an alternative framework of understanding'.[4] If a displaced indigenous woman in rural Colombia can form identifications through watching soaps on commercial television, that does not diminish, I would argue, the importance of the CRIC's efforts

[4] 'Introduction', in Shohat and Stam eds (1-17).

to harness low-power community television networks so that she can see films made by people from within her own social environment. Furthermore, it does not denigrate Marta Rodríguez's use of her own technical and aesthetic skills to create films on video that are capable of competing in international festivals and raising awareness of the problems that beset her before audiences who may indirectly, through NGOs, through solidarity or through pressure campaigns, influence high-level political decision-making.

The questions of how ethnic, class, gender and sexual identities are pitted against one another in a constant re-configuration of hierarchies, and of how the occupation of public and 'mediatised' space intervene in the wranglings that this throws up, occupy a can of worms opened to extremely provocative effect by the La Paz-based anarchist-lesbian-feminist activist group Mujeres Creando ('Women Creating'). The group orchestrates, and frequently films, 'acciones' ('actions', or glossed by Leonardo García Pabón (2003) as 'happenings') such as graffiti, protests and interactive public installations that reclaim public spaces such as city streets, squares and walls, and national television airwaves. They radically militate against hierarchical boundaries, be they political institutions; establishment organisations; aesthetic assumptions; or psychosocial attitudes to race, class, gender or sexuality. Mujeres Creando revel in making visible what silently smoulders beneath the surface of Bolivia's patriarchal, racially-hierarchised society – *cholas* who are proud to be *cholas*, prostitutes who assert their rights, lesbian desire. In one *acción* María Galindo, Julieta Paredes and their collaborators occupied the Plaza de San Francisco in central La Paz in broad daylight, painting bright red the penises of naked male volunteers, turning on its head consumer society's fetishisation and commodification of the female form. At another intervention, Galindo and Paredes, who at the time were a lesbian couple, lay down together in a

makeshift bed on the pavement, challenging the curious crowd to recognise both the legitimacy of their homosexual love and its right to occupy the public sphere.

In recent years Mujeres Creando have extended their arena of protest from the street (a space that gives them 'an interaction with society, a direct relationship, without intermediaries', Álvarez 2002: 13) to the television set, which they see as 'a parallel and analogous space to the street, with all its power to enter people's homes' (Álvarez 2002: 25). Their two series *Creando mujeres/Creating Women* and *Mamá no me lo dijo/Mum Never Told Me*, aired on prime-time slots on the national terrestrial station PAT, have certainly stirred up at least as much revulsion among TV audiences as have the street manifestations themselves among onlookers.[5] Yet I would argue that the truly subversive aspect of Mujeres Creando is not so much their simple affirmation of what was previously 'invisible', or the messages themselves that they circulate. It is rather the group's active engagement with the ways in which their messages and affirmations circulate socially, the ways in which their *acciones* hook onto and upset the moral strictures that govern their (live or television) audiences' attitudes, the savvy with which they ask us to take stock of the 'conflicts' and '*mestizajes*' that are part of the processes by which we form our identities. As García Pabón astutely observes with relation to the group's live *acciones* and street graffiti, the disturbance they create 'is not so much down to their political demonstrations (remember that La Paz is besieged by political demonstrations on almost a daily basis) or their artistic actions that are scandalously charged with references to their sexuality, but to the way in which they rupture rigidly defined spaces: politics, art, street, lesbians' (2003: 252).

In one of the *acciones*, the setting is the entrance to 'Ketal', an upmarket supermarket in the affluent Zona Sur of La Paz. A group of *cholas*, who for many of Ketal's clientele exist only as silent, impassive street vendors or irritating beggars, stand

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[5] See Orduna (2000); Lora (2003); and Galindo (n.d.); also conversations with María Galindo, August 2003.

outside, handing out anti-racism and anti-discrimination badges to women and engaging them in conversation over their desire to see a freer, more tolerant country. Rather than focusing on what the *cholas* themselves are saying (much of what they say is inaudible due to the low-quality direct sound), the camera instead concentrates its gaze on the reactions of the passers-by, who come from across the racial spectrum. Some women show genuine interest, support, curiosity or solidarity. Yet rejection is deeply etched in the faces of most – many of them dismissing them with the customary 'no, I don't have any change for you'; 'I can't buy anything from you today'; 'sorry, no time today'. Some are clearly perturbed at the idea that *cholas* might have their own political views, that they might have an agenda beyond depending on selective middle-class charity. Anyone acquainted with racial politics in La Paz might have guessed as much.

But this is more than simply an exercise in bolstering awareness of *cholas*' political demands. After the *acción* outside Ketal comes an interview with Julieta Paredes – by now relatively well known thanks to the high level of publicity achieved by Mujeres Creando's outrageous acts – still clad in the bowler hat and *pollera* skirt, the *chola*'s characteristic dress, that she had worn outside the supermarket. Paredes comments on the weary expressions of rejection captured by the camera, showing how strongly the *acción* confirmed the deeply-entrenched and tightly-bound racial and class discrimination of Bolivian society:

> I'm dressed like my grandmother, my maternal grandmother from a community in Sorata. To start with I think there's a lot of hypocrisy among the people here, hardly anyone's come up to us, they were even afraid to touch us. The hypocrisy of the women, the ladies, they say 'yes, yes, yes, very nice', but then their maids come out after them carrying [their shopping] [...] I think we've really got to question ourselves about racism, about racism seen as a way of dressing. Because if I was, or I was dressed up as, an Aymara wearing trousers or a dress, it'd be different: 'ah, Julieta, I've seen your show!' But I've been dressed as a *chola*, and no-one's come up to me. [...] Of course they recognise me, of course they can see I'm dressed as a *chola*. And to be dressed as a *chola* isn't some sort of transvestite act, or a frivolity. For me today's work has been about me, about the way I dress, because I've always dressed in trousers since I was a little girl. It's about the way people dress, [...] and

> all the contempt people have for the *pollera*, for the shawl, for the bowler hat.

By centring her analysis on her own status as an Aymara lesbian, as a working-class woman living in the city but appealing strongly to her indigenous roots, by swapping her habitual urban, male-identified trousers for the garb of the *chola*, Paredes reminds us that her own identity is constructed out of all of these elements. This is not just an exercise in affirming the right to be a lesbian, or an Indian, or a *chola*, or a feminist, or working-class; it is a reminder that identity is never univocal, always assembled out of fragments. It threatens received attitudes towards identity ('I am white', 'I am Creole', 'I have left my Indian ancestry behind') because it hints that all Bolivians are potentially *cholos*. It reveals that dominant modes of thought appeal to timeless, racially-loaded ideas about *chola* identity in order to naturalise the *chola*'s status at the bottom of the class heap, while masking the everyday and ongoing processes of discrimination that prevent that situation from changing (Hall 1996a; Weismantel 2001; Gilroy 2002). Mujeres Creando's agenda is thus fiercely anti-neoliberal, but takes a firmly constructivist approach to identity. Any type of identity politics that assumes that female, Indian, *chola*, *proletaria* or lesbian are immanent, hermetic and stable categories are viewed with deep suspicion. Yet the group also affirms that these categories, and the highly permeable boundaries between them, can be strategically useful in struggling against the heterosexist, machista, elitist, Eurocentric and racist boundaries that delineate social relations in Bolivia.[6]

For Mujeres Creando, it is neither feasible nor desirable to escape the fact that their *acciones* will be mediated via mainstream capitalist institutions and discourses. Unlike Marta Rodríguez and Jorge Silva in the 1970s, who rejected *sobreprecio* in

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[6] Although they tend to reject European 'high theory', Mujeres Creando's attitude of rejecting essentialist categories of identification while maintaining a commitment to activism has much in common with the 'queer theory' that has been advanced in recent years in the Anglo-American academe (Mayne 1991; Jagose 1996). For more on the political and cultural theories lying behind Mujeres Creando, see Mujeres Creando and Feminismo Autónomo Latinoamericano 2002 (particularly pp.7-30); Galindo and Paredes 1999; and issues of their fortnightly newspaper *Mujer Pública*.

favour of maintaining a purist militancy entirely outside of 'the system', or Jorge Sanjinés in contemporary Bolivia, who seeks to circumvent the individualising effect of the capitalist film industry by maintaining a tight grip on exhibition and video piracy, the seditious nature of Mujeres Creando derives precisely from their inscription within the mainstream.[7] According to Galindo, the presence of *Mamá no me lo dijo* on prime-time television 'enters into the routine of television, but it enters it in order to break it, to burst in with close-ups that offend false morality'; it 'uses images to break the logic of beauty and ugliness, of decency and indecency' (Galindo n.d.). The TV programmes use something of the postmodern 'MTV aesthetic' – rapid montage, jerky hand-held cameras seeking out unusual angles, hyperbolic use of slow-motion and background music; yet the Baudrillardian 'hyper-reality' that the MTV aesthetic evokes is offset by the fact that the cameras are actually filming Bolivian policemen arresting and manhandling the activists and breaking up their protests. In their television programmes the camera picks out individual faces and reactions in the crowd with great attention to detail, in slow motion, often with parodically overblown, dramatic music, because the onlookers' interaction with the 'happenings' is as much a part of the 'show' as are Galindo, Paredes and their colleagues' *acciones*. For all that the bystanders protest at the immorality of the events, the camera attests to their fascination with the show that repulses them. The television series fed off negative press: as Galindo has pointed out, even though advertisers' reticence meant PAT received almost no advertising revenue from the shows, controversy sells, and the station clocked up good ratings.[8]

As well as trading on the controversy they raise, Mujeres Creando, like Marta Rodríguez, CEFREC, or the Ukamau Group who use television, film festivals or

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[7] However, María Galindo told me that she sympathises with Jorge Sanjinés' attitude towards video piracy, given the destructive effect it has on Bolivian film production. The video compilation of *Creando mujeres* suffered heavily from piracy, thus sabotaging the group's efforts to help meet production costs through video sales (conversations with María Galindo, La Paz, August 2003). I am grateful to César Pérez for discussing with me Jorge Sanjinés' attitudes towards video piracy.

[8] Conversations with María Galindo, La Paz, August 2003.

cultural centre spaces that become available to them, take an instrumental, strategic approach to conventional notions of art which, to twist Fanon's famous phrase. are always directed against the subaltern. Although they consider themselves activists who create politics and identities rather than intellectuals who create art, when María Galindo and Julieta Paredes were invited to the Reina Sofía Museum of Contemporary Art in Madrid in 1999, they allowed themselves to be marketed as plastic or conceptual artists in order to achieve a prominent public gallery space. Rather than reject outright the bourgeois label of intellectuals, they used it to gain a mainstream exhibition space, thereby increasing the potential shock-impact of their work (Álvarez 2002: 27-29).

Mujeres Creando, along with Jorge Sanjinés and Marta Rodríguez, or the indigenous *videastas* of CEFREC and Sol y Tierra, might be described within Arlindo Machado's paradigm of the technological artist, who is concerned not with how much creative freedom that machines afford to them, but with 'whether he is capable of repostulating the notions of freedom and creativity within the context of a society that is ever more defined by information, ever more immersed in telecommunications networks, and ever more determined by the ways in which it represents itself through the cultural industry' (2002: 249). Through their various democratising models of emancipatory art, each group signals a different path towards the future. For the activists of Mujeres Creando, the media attention they gain and the extent to which they assert freedom through the networks of the cultural industry, itself signals the political effectiveness of their programmes. The more outraged the reactions of the mainstream, the more opportunity for reflection this gives to individuals. In *Mamá no me lo dijo*, each episode consists of an *acción* or a vignette, followed by a phone-in conversation slot with María Galindo, giving viewers the opportunity to engage their own personal experiences with the issues raised. In *Creando mujeres* the actress Norma Merlo plays the hammed-up part of an outraged 'respectable' middle-class lady condemning the

activists for disturbing public order and morality, for committing actions out of their station, for upsetting her noble, 'universal' (bourgeois) aesthetic tastes. Merlo's parodic character pre-empts the easy, unthinking rejections informed by prejudice, challenging onlookers and television viewers to rethink the rationale behind their rejection.

As Eagleton observes, a person who begins to decode the relationship between their own preconceptions and the dominant social order is well on the way to overcoming their prejudice – in Althusser's terms, by saying 'I am in ideology' they are necessarily at least partly outside ideology (Eagleton 1991: 19-20; Althusser 1971: 163-164).[9] Mujeres Creando show that in order to subvert a dominant order it is not necessary to circumvent its languages or its institutions – or to achieve a scientific separation from its ideological apparatus. Indeed, as I have argued in this thesis, for any effective oppositional cultural expression to claim it has avoided being mediated by the mainstream may be itself little more than utopian ideological positioning. Rather, through an astute understanding and analysis of the aesthetics, contexts and processes of the media, media practitioners such as Mujeres Creando have been able to both participate in setting the agenda which is lain before the public, and to influence the ways in which mediated messages are received, understood, and woven into the formation of identities. Truth is not borne within the message. It is only through selecting, rejecting, half-chewing and mulling over a multiplicity of messages that new truths and identities are born.

To discuss Mujeres Creando in the concluding paragraphs of this thesis is not to suggest a militant teleology whereby today's anarchist activists who blur boundaries between Indian, *chola*, *mestiza* and white, or between straight and lesbian, or between male and female, are somehow the heirs of the Ukamau Group's *indigenista* masterpieces. It is rather to provide a stark contrast to the work of militant film

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[9] 'Ideology' in Althusser's terms tends to denote what we might call 'dominant ideology'; Eagleton proposes that ideology can reside in 'the material structure of society as a whole' (1991: 30).

collectives such as the Ukamau Group or the Fundación Cine Documental. Mujeres Creando do not exactly *negotiate* with foreign and mainstream appropriation. with tropes of modernity and the primitive, with the labyrinthine interrelations between race and class, or with the Eurocentric underpinnings of mainstream film language. Rather they face all of those problems head-on, speaking them back into the mainstream capitalist national media. They undermine rather than reconstruct solid bases for collective racial, national, class or gender identities; but they maintain a keen awareness that most of the people who find their work useful hold a stake in all of those ways of identifying. The anarchist collective's approach is, in a way, the polar opposite of Jorge Sanjinés' rhetorical denunciation of European film festivals as 'intellectual supermarkets'. But my readings of the work of the Ukamau Group and the Fundación Cine Documental have shown that their films have often employed strategies similar to those of Mujeres Creando – often purely through circumstance – expanding their discourses from indigenous communities onto a wider social plane. The encounter between revolution and *pachakuti* has been a creative one. On the one hand vanguard intellectuals have been seduced by what seemed to be a thrilling, exotic version of historical dialectics. On the other, indigenous elders, historians and politicians have been able to expand their interests into wider social networks, gaining solidarity for their cause.

Much work in this field remains to be done. There has been no space here to analyse in depth much of the work of Sanjinés, Silva and Rodríguez's contemporaries – for instance Pepe Sánchez's *Río Chiquito* (1970), made with a French crew in FARC-held Colombian territory, or Alfonso Gumucio's *cine minero* (miners' cinema) workshops in early 1980s Bolivia. I have been unable to dig more deeply into the ways in which the Ukamau Group's exile films *El enemigo principal* (Peru, 1973) and *¡Fuera de aquí!* (Ecuador, 1977) have interacted with the local, regional and national

environments in which they have been produced and screened.[10] Further qualitative research (for instance through interviews with participants, audiences or distributors) might shed more light on the ways in which people have really identified with the politicised cinemas and videos I have discussed here.

Aesthetic investigations into these films' narrative, visual and aural strategies might take any number of paths in elucidating the ways in which they build upon or deform existing national or continental cultural types. The question of these materials' presence in global cultural, economic and ideological networks could potentially tell us much about the ways in which different cultures and societies imagine one another. My focus in Chapter 1 on French and Anglo-American, rather than German, Russian, Angolan or Japanese reactions to the films in question reflects my own linguistic capabilities and geographical mobility rather than the level of interest that those countries' inhabitants have shown in them. This thesis has outlined some of the conflicts and debates surrounding certain attempts to create specifically 'Andean' modes of cinematic communication, but the wider matters of whether such geographically or culturally bound idioms can or should be achieved, or of whether we can usefully talk of a global film language, could be discussed at much greater length. The larger task of understanding the ways in which cultures (*mestizo* and Aymara; proletarian and middle-class; Colombian and French...) relate to one another is by definition a complex and unending one.

Further study along these broad, winding and interweaving avenues might shed much clearer light on such issues. Here I have sketched out a historical and aesthetic framework through which we might begin to think more fruitfully about the small body of films discussed here. We might use it for reflecting on how films such as these have

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[10] For histories of Bolivian cinema that incorporate *Enemigo* and *Fuera* into their national traditions, see Gumucio (1983); Mesa (1985). I have elaborated further on the problematic national and continental political backdrops to these films in a recent conference paper (Wood 2005).

intervened in the cultural ways of understanding who we are, and how we relate to the social world.

References

Films

Note: Videos made through CEFREC usually credit a 'responsable' (resp.) rather than a director, to reflect the collaborative nature of their productions.

Note: I have provided the format on which films were shot (for instance DV-Cam, or 16mm) wherever such information has been available.

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